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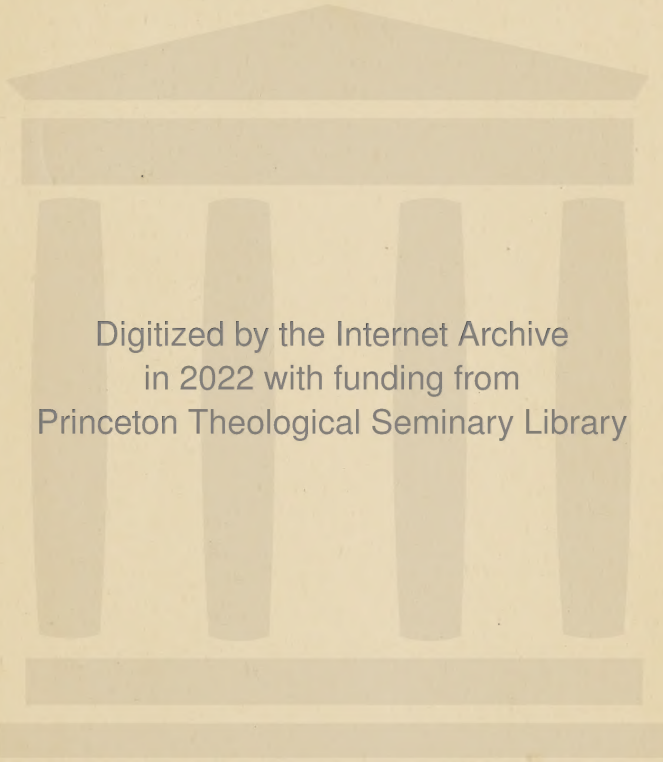
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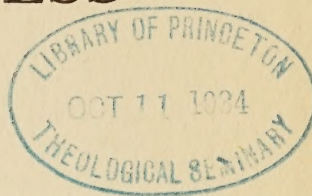
Magary, Alvin Edwin, 1879-
Character and happiness



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CHARACTER AND HAPPINESS

CHARACTER AND HAPPINESS



BY

ALVIN E. MAGARY

MINISTER, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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PREFACE

These chapters have been drawn from the daily labor of a preacher in a down-town church. They present no plan for the reformation of our social order, no criticism of international politics, nor any theological innovation whereby the world may be quickly saved. They are addressed to men and women who would find happiness and continuing usefulness in the pursuit of those ordinary practices of good common sense by which most of us must find the solutions of our problems.

This is a very simple little book. Perhaps, amid the complicated and bewildering things which are so freely offered in these clamorous days, it may not be unwelcome.

ALVIN E. MAGARY.

THE MANSE,
Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1924.

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SELF-MAKING

ALL men are self-made. For what we are, we are responsible. It may not be our fault if we are too rich or too poor, or if we lack the social grace which can be attained only in a childhood home; but for the manhood or the womanhood that is ours, we ourselves are to be credited or charged. A man's character is not that which was in him when he was born; it is that which he has added, by his own choices, to his original endowment. A man may be rich in fortune and powerful in body because his ancestors were so before him; but no man is honest save by his own choice. It cannot be denied that right choosing in matters of character is made more probable for some than for others and that the building of a fine manhood, amid circumstances of squalor and sin, is more difficult than it is amid the refinements of a good home; but there are few of us who can charge our failures in character to any unpropitiousness in early circumstance so extreme as to justify us in disclaiming responsibility for making ourselves what we are. Instinctively, we know that it is right and just that we should give account of ourselves for the deeds we have done.

Character is, therefore, an artificial thing. It is

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“made” not “given.” This is not to say that it is unreal. A beautiful building is real, but it is artificial. Nature never built a Gothic cathedral. Pictures, poems, machines, cities, civilization itself, are real but artificial. They are made by men. And so man makes his own life, just as truly as he builds his house, by taking thought and resolution, by self-denial, purpose and perseverance. Our pious forefathers called this process of self-making “edification,” which means, literally, building. A man, according to their thought, was an edifice. The Apostle Peter gives us the specifications for such a building. “Giving all diligence,” he says, “add to your faith virtue, and to your virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.” This is the process of edification, the building up of the individual life. Jesus likens the good and bad self-builders to those who build on the lasting rock or the shifting sands. Paul talks about being built up on Christ and urges his friends to use great care to build on no other foundation.

Among all the creatures with which God has peopled the earth, man is the only one that creates himself. It is this that definitely sets him apart from the rest of creation. He alone is the partner of the divine in his own making. The command to subdue all things is a command, first of all, to

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subdue and compel the nature within himself and to turn it to his own purposes. Insofar as he shapes himself in accordance with the plan he has adopted, he is a sovereign spirit, akin to God; insofar as he remains static, adding nothing to the endowment with which he was born, he is flesh, brother to the beast, and fit only to return to the dust from which he sprang.

When we look deep into human life, we conclude that all men are alike. They all come into the world possessed of common instincts. When circumstances press them back into the area of those primitive instinctive endowments, they act as much alike as wolves might do. Kipling reminds us that "Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's lady are sisters under the skin." Nevertheless there is a tremendous difference in the two women. The fact is that the momentous differences among men and women are not in the things that lie under the skin but in the things which are on the surface; not in the things which are fundamental to their common nature but in the things which are the outcome of their highly differentiated characters. They differ as a cathedral differs from a warehouse; both may be of the same natural stone; the difference is in the plan according to which they have been built. They may differ as a gaudy house of ill-fame differs from a humble but lovely cottage. The nature of the material is of less

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import than the purpose of the builder and the habits of the tenant.

Primitively we are all alike, inheritors of a common nature. There is not one in a thousand who would not fight like a cornered rat under certain circumstances; not one who would not steal in certain extremities. It is because of this heritage of common, underlying instincts that we read so understandingly the lives of men like Abraham and David, who were so great and so little, so saintly and so prone to sin. The difference between the thief and the honest man is not a difference in nature but a difference in character. The instinct to take what we want is a natural instinct. Any child will take anything he wants until he is taught to do otherwise. The character which bids us suffer rather than be dishonest is as unnatural an attainment as the ability to walk on our hands; it is the result of long practice in what all mankind believes to be virtue and is the result of purpose and creative power in ourselves.

In the great enterprise of life we are all given the materials sufficient to make manhood. The colors, canvass and brushes are at hand and it is for us to determine what the picture shall be. If it is a thing of beauty that we produce, ours is the credit; if it is a meaningless daub or a disgusting obscenity we can shift the blame to no other than ourselves; nor can anyone else bear the consequences for us. Whatever view of the atoning

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grace we may hold, we know that forgiveness of our sins cannot take place through any transaction entirely outside ourselves. In a definite sense we must work out our own salvation, we must give our own account of the deeds we have done and we must bear the consequence of whatever failure we have made.

In all of our judgments of each other we take these facts for granted. We remember, for instance, a scene between John Bright and Benjamin Disraeli. Disraeli said to Bright after the great reformer had made a speech in Parliament, "Bright, I should give anything to have made that speech." And Bright's reply was candid enough. "Disraeli," he said, "you could have done so had you been an honest man." The assumption was, of course, that Disraeli had made himself the man he was and that he could have made himself otherwise. A wife may have a husband who has a bad temper and red hair, yet if she is a sensible woman, she will blame him for his temper and never think of blaming him for the color of his hair. The one he inherited from his ancestors, the other he made for himself. It is probably true that so far as inherited characteristics are concerned, history is not long enough to have recorded any change in men. The men who built the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen would be, if translated to our own time and dressed in modern clothing, no more unlike ourselves than many an immigrant

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who passes through Ellis Island any day. The change that takes place is not a change in "human nature" but a change in men. If you and I are not changing ourselves constantly, we are not fulfilling the character of our manhood.

It is a persistent and destructive heresy that our characters are fixed by influences outside ourselves. The weakling excuses himself by saying that this or that unfortunate characteristic is natural to him. It is all the more to his discredit, that being conscious of some particular natural tendency to unlovely conduct, he has not gained a victory over his primitive self. It may be that charity toward the faults of others is the way of salvation; it is certain that charity toward our own faults is the way of destruction. In dealing with ourselves, ruthlessness is the only way of salvation. "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut it off." To allow ourselves the slightest moral discount because of some fancied natural disability, is to cheat ourselves of the accrument of power which, at last, will enable us to take our places among men and women of integrity.

In the making of himself, man encounters certain obstacles. There are, of course, the obstacles of environment. In every man's surroundings there are some things that influence him for evil. In the homes of the rich and poor alike, terrible mistakes are made in the training of the young and it is doubtless true that many men and women

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carry through life the spiritual scars of wounds inflicted by well-meaning but unwise parents, far more terrible than any wounds of the flesh can be. Bad environment is not confined to the slums of the city. The environment of the neglected child is less harmful than that of the over-indulged. For most of us, however, whatever may have been the material circumstances of our childhood, there is little excuse on the score of environment. Our parents did for us as well as they could and guided us with the best wisdom they had. If we have failed to make men and women of ourselves we cannot justly blame our failure on the surroundings that were imposed on us; nor can we charge our own folly to any want of skill or wisdom in those whose highest desire was that we should grow up to lives of honor and usefulness. The most contemptible of all self-justifications is that which implies an indictment of our parents.

Far more formidable are the obstacles within ourselves. In old English common law, the indictment always read, "Moved and seduced by the instigations of the devil." This was the quaint old way of accounting for the evil that men do. Modern psychology accounts for it in much the same way, calling the devil by more modern and scientific names, such as the subconscious mind, suppressed desires, or various kinds of complexes. Whatever we may call these inner impulses to

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wrongdoing, we must deal with them and conquer them before we can attain to character.

We shall consider, in another place, the experiences of the Apostle Paul in dealing with what he called "the body of this death." Matthew Arnold recognized a power, outside ourselves, which makes for righteousness—that was his definition of God. Paul recognized another power, opposed to this, a power inside ourselves which makes for evil.

However little we know about human nature, we know that it is never simple. Every man is at least two men. "No man," said Phillips Brooks, "can absolutely characterize his neighbor and no man can characterize himself. Every man is good, every man is bad." A celebrated London preacher to whom people came from all the world to seek advice and confess their wrongdoings, has said that his experience in dealing with the moral problems and delinquencies of all sorts and conditions of men has convinced him that any man is capable of doing anything.

Whether we accept the Calvinistic doctrine of foreordination or not, we must repudiate that far more terrible scientific doctrine of physical determinism, which refers sin and criminality, not to the motions of the soul but to the shape of the skull. Samuel Butler imagined a topsy-turvy social order in which men who had embezzled trust funds called in a surgeon to cure them and men

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who had taken cold were put in jail; but the common sense of mankind invariably declares that every man is himself responsible for the good or the bad that he does. Apart from such an assumption, law and morals and civilization itself become impossible.

We have said that it is on the surface that men are most widely different from one another. Sometimes we hear persons criticized on the score that their goodness is all on the surface. Now it is to be much doubted whether there is any goodness in anyone that is not on the surface. At least it is certain that in the highest type of human character goodness shines like a lighted lamp, set where all may see it. One might as well talk of some mystic wealth lying hidden amidst unknown mountains as talk of any goodness that is not expressed in conduct. A good man is a man whose actions are good. The man whose bad temper and selfish conduct must be excused on the plea that he has a heart of gold is asking, from his much tried family and associates, far more forbearance than he is willing to extend to them. A frowning face may sometimes mask a kindly spirit; but it is usually the expression of a disagreeable soul. "If you have tears," cries Antony, "prepare to shed them now!" If you have smiles, let us behold them. If there is kindness in you, let it be seen in your actions and heard in your speech. No man, having

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a candle, hides it under a bushel. Also, a good tree is known by its fruits.

What we are is what we have made ourselves to be. It is for us to engrave on our lives the symbols of the eternal or to deface them with the obscenities of sin. For you, the time may be partly spent and there may be writing that you would fain erase. You cannot do it; but you can cast your page aside and begin anew. In spite of all the powers that make for evil, without us and within, in spite of the "instigations of the devil" and the alluring temptations of which the world is full, we can, in the words of Paul, "put off the old man, with his deeds, and put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." The history of men is lustrous with the lives of those who have made stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things. It is a matter of your own choice and resolution.

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WE are told that when the Prodigal Son came to the end of his remorseful lamentations he said, "I will arise and go." One may imagine him, rising to his feet after that resolution with every vestige of misery swept from his heart. There is no cure for the unhappiness of regret or the sorrow of bereavement so effectual as a well-defined purpose. Misery cannot live with resolution. As soon as we "make up our minds," relief comes. A course of action is better for most cases of unhappiness than a course of medicine.

Men talk of "divine discontent" and of "ambition's holy fire," but these things are neither divine nor holy. Discontent no more incites to action than indigestion does to appetite; in both cases there is a gnawing hunger that can never be satisfied. Ambition is often a torture, a tempter, a whip without a bridle. The divine thing is purpose. It is the resolute *will-to-do* which exhibits man's oneness with the creator. We never live a better hour than that when, having brooded over our blunders and our disappointments, we rise from our posture of ineffectual complaint with a commitment to action in our hearts. So long as

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we keep that resolution and labor toward its fulfillment we shall not be unhappy.

Before we can form a purpose we must know what we want. Blessed is the man who really knows what he wants and who bravely sets himself to get it. You will be surprised, when you consider the matter, to discover that there are multitudes of good things in the world that you can very well do without. Every time you cross off something that you consider not essential to your happiness your chance of happiness increases. A writer on transcontinental automobile touring says, "The best way to prepare your outfit is to make a list of what you think you may need and then cross off everything that you can do without. By the time you get to San Francisco you will have thrown away half of the remainder." I once met an aged friend coming out of a book-store. "Every time I visit this place," he said, "I come out thanking the Lord that there are so many good things in the world that I don't want." Many of us have permitted ourselves to suppose that we want all the things our neighbors have. Let us think this over. We shall have taken a long step toward happiness when we can look at our friend's sixty horse-power limousine and his six servant-power house and say truly to ourselves, "Thank the good Lord, I don't want them." We may admire our friend's possessions, we need not pretend to despise them; yet we may be well content that they

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are his and not our own. Indeed, it is one of the necessary accomplishments of a happy life that we shall find pleasure in admiring many things which we have no desire to possess. One may sit, admiring a picture in a gallery of art, for twenty minutes at a time and yet have not the slightest desire to possess it. Perhaps culture might be defined as the ability to appreciate and admire things we cannot possibly possess and talents we can never exercise.

Yet there must be things that we do want. The person who wants everything cannot be happy; neither can the person who wants nothing. He who needs nothing is the poorest of men. To obliterate from our minds all desire, far from being a step toward saintship, is a step toward the lowest type of bestiality. A jelly-fish wants nothing. If life is to be interesting we must be spurred with some desire, some hope, some promise, that shall continue to lure us on in adventurous quest. Every one of us ought to thank God if He has given us a longing for something that is not too easily obtained. If we have no desire of this kind, or if our desire be a frivolous one, inadequate to supply our advancing life with a sustained purpose, then existence becomes a bore and all the labor we have done seems wasted, because it has led us into this blind alley where we can but wait in hopeless weariness for release.

We may want a million dollars or a collection

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of Peruvian postage stamps, or skill at playing the bass drum. Whatever it may be, trying to get it will bring us happiness, even though we never succeed in possessing it. Men who have tried and failed are seldom miserable. Such men have recuperative powers; they try again, perhaps changing their design to accord more practically with their demonstrated limitations. From failure men often learn what their true desires are. When your bass drum practice interferes with the domestic peace and the household rises up in rebellion you may learn that you love domestic peace better than you love the thrill of creating percussive rhythm and you may relegate your instrument to the attic with complete contentment. The Prodigal Son thought he wanted high life in a big city, as many a man since his time has done. He got it and was sorely disappointed. It was through the failure of his false dream that he came to a true knowledge of his own heart.

There is a better chance for happiness if we want to *do* something than there is if we merely want to *have* something. A task to which we have committed ourselves is always a source of satisfaction. No idle, uncommitted life can be wholly happy. People who find the world a place of slavish drudgery are those who labor, not because they believe in their work, but because they must somehow provide for the necessities of the day or gain that which shall enable them to indulge the

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hour's appetite. They have no purpose by which to measure their progress as they pass from year to year and from task to task. Such people may want a thousand things, they may want everything. They reach out, as babies do, for everything that seems to glitter. A woman may be unhappy because she wants a forty-dollar hat. No sooner does she get it than she is as unhappy as before. She is that kind of a woman. Her desire straightway flies to something else. It is her failing that everything that she has seems inferior; everything other women have is superior. It is the rule of her life to want what she has not, and to be dissatisfied with what she has. Her life is a series of trivial cravings and dissatisfactions because she has never compelled herself to make a choice big enough to engage and satisfy the powers of her soul. Many such a woman, faced with some great necessity, has risen to the occasion like a heroine and has found contentment in a purpose which stilled the paltry clamorings of self.

The purpose which most surely promotes happiness is the one on which we actually work. To resolve that, when the time is opportune, we shall do thus and so, is of little good; but to make a resolution and actually do something toward fulfilling it, is one of the solid elements of contentment. To be saving money or acquiring skill, no matter how slowly, which one day is to count in

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the sum of our chosen achievement, is to lay up, in addition to money and skill, a fund of self respect and satisfaction.

To work toward the accomplishment of purpose requires a certain power of will which can only be built up by successive individual acts, each one involving choice and contributing toward the end in view. Therefore, the "end-in-view" should always be secondary to the means at hand. A man cursed by the whiskey habit will never cure himself by resolving to stop drinking. The cure will begin when he resolves not to take this particular drink that is now offered him. There is no will-power involved in forming a general intention. The Prodigal Son would have felt no better if he had placed "some day" at the beginning of his resolution. He was saved from his despair because he said, "I will arise and go," and because, forthwith, he did arise and he did go.

We find happiness in a sense of accomplishment and a sense of accomplishment comes only when we do the "next thing." A business man, sitting in a comfortable chair, envisioning the outcome of a year of self-denying industry, will pass the time pleasantly enough; but real satisfaction will come with a day of thoroughgoing, self-denying industry. When Dr. Johnson said that hell is paved with good intentions he must have meant those intentions which involve no immediate action. Somehow the purpose of our lives must be tied up

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with our daily tasks, so that we may feel that the thing we are doing is definitely related to the thing we purpose to do. The thought of a boy following a plow may not suggest a college class-room, but if the boy is saving his money and preparing his mind, every step behind the plow may be a step toward the object of his desire. If no "next thing" in our life can be made to contribute to our purpose, then we should either change the circumstances of our life or change our purpose. It is folly for a man of forty, with a family to support, and with a competent position in business, to continue to dream of spouting Hamlet on the stage or of commanding a man-of-war. If he permits such vain ambition to occupy his mind, he will inevitably fall at least into the great class of the frustrated. He will torture himself with regrets for what might have been. If he really has a talent that would have made him an acceptable Hamlet or a worthy admiral, that talent can be utilized in some artistic endeavor or some exercise of leadership still within his reach. Let him understand that he failed to realize his larger dream because he did not definitely set himself to the business of realizing it and let him avoid continuing in his error.

Nor need we be turned from our purpose by the discovery that we have not so great an equipment for its accomplishment as we supposed. It is common for people to overrate their abilities and to

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underrate the difficulty of their chosen tasks. We need not give up and confess defeat simply because we find that we are not as highly endowed as we supposed ourselves to be. Benvenuto Cellini, in his autobiography, tells of a beautiful piece of marble that he secured. He dreamed a statue and began to turn his dream into actuality; but, alas, after he had done some work on it he discovered a crack in the marble which made the execution of his original design impossible. "How rotten it was," he says, "was shown afterwards. . . The narcissus was on a wooden stand and [it was upset] so that it was broken above the breasts. I mended it and, that the joining might not be noticed, I made the garland of flowers which you can see on its bosom." Many of us, because of some folly of the past, some unfortuitousness of circumstances or some defect in ourselves, find, in midlife, when we have done much work on our design, that we can never make it what we planned. Yet we need not cast down our tools. "My lord," said Benvenuto, "this marble is much cracked; yet for all that I shall make something of it." So may we do with life. The very disappointments which have tempted us to surrender may be turned to garlands wherewith to beautify our achievement.

The world will help us if we know what we want just as the loitering crowd makes place for the hurrying citizen who knows where he is go-

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ing and why he wants to get there. The question is not how fast we go, but how straight, or at least how persistently, toward a chosen destination. If we are tired of the husks of life it may be that we need, like the Prodigal Son, to come to ourselves and to say, "I will."

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WITH all due allowance for modesty, there is after all nothing more interesting to us, nothing more important to us, than ourselves. One cannot write a letter to a friend without the constant use of the first personal pronoun. If we do not think about ourselves, the chances are that we do not think at all, for it is only as we visualize ourselves against the background of the world that life is intelligible. So we need not be surprised, as we read the epistles of Paul to find the first personal pronoun used with the greatest freedom. In the second epistle to the Corinthians there are some two hundred and thirty-nine verses. The first personal pronoun is to be found in the epistle about three hundred times, or more than once to every verse. The Apostle's ringing announcement concerning his qualifications and competence for his office proceeds out of the only state of mind in which a man can ever do any great work, a thorough and aggressive confidence in himself as the validly chosen agent of the cause for which he speaks.

"Who is sufficient for these things?" "I am," answers Paul. "I am an ambassador of God. I am a fellow-worker, a co-partner, with Him. I

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am not behind the chiefest of the Apostles. Is any man bold to come before God? So am I. Is any man a Hebrew? I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Is any man a Roman? I was born a Roman citizen. Is any man a minister of Christ? So am I. You say I am a boaster? Yea, and as the truth of Christ is in me, no man in the region of Achaia shall stop me of this boasting."

One of the most popular of misconceptions is that worth is always doubtful of itself. The really able man is supposed to have a very poor notion of his own powers. He is expected to regard anything he possesses as "a poor thing, but mine own." Sometimes, in trying to assume what they believe to be a creditable attitude of modesty in regard to their powers and possessions, men act in an absurdly artificial manner. There is a difference between conceit and self-confidence, between vanity and an honest appraisalment of our powers. Paul, like every other man who has impressed his personality on history, knew very well that he was a better man than any of those who sought to depreciate him in the eyes of the world and, though his nature was deeply humble, he did not hesitate to assert with emphasis his qualifications as an Apostle of the living God.

I should like to impress this on the minds of those who have begun to doubt their own sufficiency. When we allow the world to scare us out of our self-confidence, we take a long step toward

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failure. For that which we are called to do, we are sufficient, if we will only think so. What others have done and are doing we too can do. We have the usual equipment with which men do their work, a reasonable skill, a fair mental endowment, a moderately good opportunity and the will to succeed. Very well, then, we will go ahead. In spite of any untoward circumstances in which we find ourselves, in spite of the side-long looks of those who are swifter to criticize than to encourage, we will take up the burden, believing that God will give us strength to carry it. It is part of a brave man's faith that he can do what he ought to do.

It is true that great concerns are committed to but few. You and I are not numbered among the glorious company of the Apostles; yet to each one of us, however obscure we may be, is committed some task, which must be done by us if it is to be done at all. The world's work is not carried on by the few who are great, but by the multitude who are commonplace. An English writer of a generation or two ago wrote an essay which he entitled "Screws." It seems that in his day an unsound horse was called a "screw," and, in his essay, he moralizes at length on the fact that the work done in the streets of London was done by animals on which the horse fancier would look with contempt. These spavined, kneesprung nags were far from perfect, yet they did the work of

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the city and did it well. So it is with men. The world's work is done by the multitude of mediocre folk who simply do their devoted best. Paul himself was not without his limitations. He was not a man one would have selected as likely to become the greatest religious missionary in the history of men. His health was far from good, his temper was over-passionate, and his enemies taunted him about his insignificant appearance; yet for that world-redeeming task to which he felt himself called, he knew he was sufficient.

You and I are sent into the world to work out our own salvation; by which we understand that we must courageously undertake our own particular mission. No other can do it for us. We are here to fulfill the purpose of our own lives. Our tools are within ourselves. It is our own equipment with which we must work. It must be *your* brain that thinks through your problems, *your* conscience that guides you, *your* sin that condemns you, and *your* faith that saves you. The great transactions of your life are carried on within yourself and cannot be carried on within the personality of any other. Your purposes, out of which have grown your lifelong efforts, were conceived in your own mind and dedicated in your own heart. You are the only person whose past you know and you are the only one whose future you can secure. It is well, then, that you should think about yourself, plan for yourself, preach to

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yourself, and, on those delightful occasions when you can get anyone to listen, talk about yourself.

The capital "I" is the text of the second epistle to the Corinthians. The Apostle is writing about himself, making his claims, vindicating his work, establishing his authority, confuting his detractors and impressing himself by every means in his power upon the minds of those people of Corinth who are inclined to undervalue him. As he sits down to write, he has in mind the whole Christian undertaking, with all its tremendous tasks of world regeneration, and he realizes that he is to play an important part in setting this great enterprise in motion. As he contemplates the things which must be done, the sacrifices which must be made, he asks himself, "Who is sufficient for these things," and he answers his own question, "I am." It is the confident, courageous assertion of a man who knows himself and who knows what he is called to do. It was an appalling task, sufficient to turn the courage of anyone, but this man, physically frail though he was, approached it with a sure faith in his power to accomplish it.

Some of the tasks that are given to us ordinary persons do require extraordinary powers. What a task is the training of the young and how inadequate is the average parent's equipment for it! Think of the work that must be done by each generation in the preparation of the generation that is to follow. Who is sufficient for the work of

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guiding boys and girls through the tender years of babyhood into childhood and adolescence? Who is really competent to be a father, a mother, a school teacher or a trainer of the child in the things of God? These are immortal souls, with which you and I have to deal, and we are often daunted when we consider the import of the task and our want of experience and skill. Yet it ought to be done; it must be done; and there is nothing for us but to do it. It is a part of our religious faith to believe that we shall be able to do it as God wants it done.

There are times when, as we look on our responsibilities, we feel pathetically unequal to them. We doubt our own fitness for the work which we know we ought to do. We are frightened by some emergency that has arisen in our affairs. Thousands of men and women have become nervous wrecks simply through the fear that they were not sufficient for the tasks to the accomplishment of which they felt themselves impelled. You and I are sufficient for that which God has appointed us to do. Our authority is the same as the authority of the Apostles. "In the sight of God speak we in Christ." Our sufficiency is the same as that of the Apostle, "Not that we are sufficient ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." A stricken world calls for help to men and women who believe themselves able to accomplish some part of the task of bringing peace and good will to the earth.

CHARACTER AND HAPPINESS

These things must be done. It is appointed of the divine purpose that they shall be done and the agents of the Divine are none other than you and me. Says John Oxenham,

"Only through me! The clear, high call comes pealing;
Above the thunders of the battle plain;
Only through me can Life's red wounds find healing;
Only through me shall earth have peace again."

The great men of the Bible were, for the most part, under-equipped for their tasks, yet they accomplished them. Moses wanted eloquence, yet he left behind him imperishable words. David was a stripling, yet he slew his giant. Jeremiah lacked natural gifts, yet he became the great prophet of his day. Matthew was a tax-gatherer and a social outcast. John was a fisherman. So the list goes. If the spread of Christianity had waited for men worthy to be apostles of Christ, the story would never have been heard of outside a few Jewish neighborhoods and would have been long since forgotten. The most unlikely men were the very men to whom Jesus committed the launching of His church in the world.

The Christian church today has a task no harder than that which faced the Christian church two thousand years ago. These early Christians of Corinth and elsewhere faced a Pagan world in which sin, greed, infidelity, cruelty and luxurious dissipation had become the regular program of

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life. What hope was there for such a world? Who could be sufficient for such a task? "I," said Paul, "I am," and in that spirit of self-sufficiency for the thing that had to be done, those early Apostles of Christ went forth and turned the world upside down. It is to us ordinary people that the task of overcoming the spirit of hate in the world is committed. If civilization is sick it is for us to cure it. If it cannot endure with the nations warring against one another, then upon us ordinary folk is laid the task of abolishing war. We must not say we cannot do it. The thing is to be done and there are no supermen to accomplish it.

All the necessary daily business of life must be done, and well done, and you and I must do it. There are greater men and women in the world than we are, but they will not do our work for us; nor will they answer for us the vexing riddles of our lives. We must work out our own salvation. It is a necessary part of our faith that we can do what we ought to do and that God will give us such strength and wisdom as may be required.

Whatever I ought to do, I must do—that is the "categorical imperative" of speculative ethics. Whatever I ought to do I can do—that is the faith of one who believes in the inner powers of the soul.

BEING HAPPY

A MAN came to me for advice. Life was going badly with him and he was in despair; yet, as he told his troubles, I could not see that there was much that was worth discussing. It was all intangible and vague. At last I asked him, "What is it that you really want?" He answered, "I want to be happy and I cannot find any way to happiness. My father was a minister and I was taught that there was happiness in living a religious life, in prayer and worship and service, but I have not found it."

"I want to be happy" is a common cry, but only a small percentage of men and women desire happiness enough to get it. They want it as they want a million dollars. They would be glad enough if someone would bestow it on them, but they have not any intention of working hard enough or practicing self-denial enough to get it for themselves. It is to be doubted if anything worth having can be gotten easily. Certainly most of us who miss happiness miss it because we will not pay the price and take it.

A young man of my acquaintance once applied to a noted violin teacher for lessons. The great professor bade him play and sat gravely puffing

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at his pipe while he listened. At last he held up his hand. "That is enough," he said, "you do very well but you have much to learn. I will take you if you will agree to stay with me two years and to practice five hours each day." It was a definite proposal, to be accepted or refused. The young man considered it, came to the conclusion that he did not want to be a violinist keenly enough to justify the expenditure of so much time and turned his attention to other things. One might well make the old violinist's proposal to those who come to him with the plea that they want to be happy. Practice being happy for two years, five hours every day. Undertake the business of living as earnestly as the student of any art undertakes to attain the skill that it requires. Why should you suppose that life is easier to attain than art? You compel your children to spend hundreds of hours learning to spell. How many hours do they spend learning how to live? If you cannot learn to knock a golf-ball around a meadow save by hard practice, why should you expect to attain the art of life by any easier process?

No earnest soul seeks happiness as an end. The doctrine that pleasure is the chief good has never commended itself to any large part of mankind. We always suspect the professed Hedonist of being only half convinced of the truth of his own arguments, and we know that, brought face to face with a great moral situation, he is just as

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likely to be carried away in the surge of some great sacrificial motive as any other man. In elemental situations, the theory that happiness is the chief end of existence simply drops out of mind. Yet we instinctively feel that a good man ought to be a happy man. The friends of Job, who argued that all misery must be the outcome of wrongdoing, were expressing a conviction which has always been felt by men. There must be some connection between being good and being happy. Jesus evidently expected that his followers should lead happy lives. It is true that he spoke much of crosses and burdens and that he called on his disciples to prepare themselves for tribulation; but, even while he waited for the dawning of that day which was to witness his own supreme agony, he talked to them of joy and promised them that his peace should possess their hearts.

It is safe to assume that something is wrong with the life-plan of men and women who live unhappily. The joy of living may not be easy to attain; but it should not be more difficult than many other accomplishments to which quite ordinary people aspire, such as the mastery of a foreign tongue, or the ability to play sonatas. Like these things, it may be gained only by systematic and assiduous trying. The failure of many people to make a success of life is due to their blindness to the fact that living is an art, to be learned like any other art, adding skill to

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natural endowment until a masterful competency is attained. Most of us make meaningless daubs of our lives because we have not taught ourselves to live. When Jesus called to the people to come unto him and learn, he implied that the rest he promised them was something to be acquired as we acquire an art. It is no arbitrarily bestowed gift; it is something won through persevering effort.

The first thing we must learn is that there is no happiness outside ourselves. The musician knows very well that there is no music in his piano. The piano is a mere mechanical contrivance, like a meat chopper. Indeed, it is probably as imperfect, mechanically, as any invention of man. For direct efficiency and mechanical perfection, the meat chopper is far its superior. Yet it is the means by which the player expresses the music that was in Mozart's soul through the music that is in his own, always plus the skill he has taken the pains to acquire. The things about us are our tools; they are the imperfect instruments by which we learn to give expression to the kingdom of heaven which is within us. If you ask what the musician is to do, supposing him to be deprived of the use of his piano, I answer that his piano is only one of a hundred means by which a man can be musical, that, moreover, music is but one of the arts, and that a soul craving artistic expression

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will find the means, regardless of the price of pianos or anything else.

At the outset of our search for happiness, we must understand that, in the higher quests of the soul, means are secondary; the sovereign intention of the soul is the all-determining factor. This is what Jesus meant when he told his followers to seek first the kingdom of God (which is "within you") and to let all other things come as they would. If we want happiness we must not expect it to be handed to us by another, as one might give us the deed to a house; nor must we expect to find it in the possession of things; if we want to be happy we must practice happiness, just as, if we want to sing, we must practice singing. The difference is that while there be but few who possess the fleshly chords in the throat to make a beautiful voice, there is no man so poorly endowed as to be unable to live a beautiful life, if only he will dedicate himself to the learning of the art.

I am far from minimizing the trials that many people are called upon to bear, the blighting misfortunes, the rending sorrows that darken all the face of life for them. I know very well that some souls are tried almost beyond endurance, while to others are given all the instruments which would seem to make a happy life easy to attain. Some have grand pianos thrust upon them while others yearn in vain for tin whistles. Yet the fact is that these gaudily furnished lives are as often wretched

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as any others, while some of the most blessed men and women we have ever known are those who have passed through the deepest affliction. The vast majority of discontented, complaining, contentious folk have, at command, all the means necessary for a life of sensible enjoyment. The tragedy of it is that so many men and women labor all their lives for what they think are the means of happiness and then spend the second half of their lives in a pitiful descent into unhappy old age. They are like a man who spent all he possessed to buy a perfect violin and then learned for the first time that it would produce sweet sounds only in the hands of one who had learned to play.

Many who have learned much else have failed to learn this elemental truth. Goethe remarked to his friend, Eckermann, that he had lived some seventy years and had enjoyed many successes, that fortune had been his and a measure of fame such as few men enjoy, yet, as he looked back, he doubted if he had known as much as half a dozen days of real happiness. In the fifty-seventh chapter of his great work, Gibbon quotes a memorandum of the Caliph Abdalrahmin to exactly the same effect. "I have now reigned above fifty years in victory or peace, beloved by my subjects, dreaded by my enemies and respected by my allies. Riches, honor, power and pleasure waited on my will, nor does any earthly blessing appear to have been wanting to my felicity. In this situation I

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have diligently numbered the days of pure and genuine happiness which have fallen to my lot. They amount to fourteen. O man, place not thy confidence in this present world." Both these men had everything that heart could wish; yet life was not sweet. The idea that happiness is to be found in possession of such things is one to which the human mind persistently clings in spite of ages of human experience to the contrary. We shall have made great progress when we have put that error away from us forever.

Sometimes, when we are weary and harrassed, we make the opposite mistake. We think that if only we had no responsibilities, no houses to keep up, no furnaces to tend, no families to rear, we should be happy. From this mood springs all that sentimental gush about the blessings of poverty and ignorance, which earns a living for the uninspired poet. From it comes the foolish notion, advocated by Rousseau, that the natural state of man was savagery and that, therefore, man must be happiest when least concerned with customs of civilization. There is no evidence that the savage is happier than other men. There is certainly no evidence that the educated man, banished to some far-off island, where life would be reduced to its simplest terms, would be any happier than the same man placed in the least comfortable circumstances in a civilized environment. If there is no happiness in wealth, there is assuredly none in

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poverty. It is one of the hypocrisies of conventional moralizing to proclaim that to be born in a hovel is a blessing. It is significant that of the two preeminently great men in American history, one was born to great wealth and the other to abject poverty. In neither case did greatness depend on worldly condition. In both cases the kingdom was within.

Freedom from anxiety is not the secret we are seeking, for, as Froude remarked, freedom from anxiety may be attained with a hard heart and a good digestion. If those bursts of thankful triumph, so characteristic of the Apostle Paul, are to be taken as a criterion, happiness in its deepest, most indomitable form, happiness in the sense of *blessedness*, may be attained by those who have not property, hard hearts, nor physical health, who are beset by great difficulties and who are, at the same time, burdened with what seem to be super-human responsibilities.

This deeper kind of happiness differs from the transitory lightness of spirits which we all enjoy occasionally, as being wealthy differs from having a pocketful of money. As there are days of sunshine in every climate, so there are periods of conscious well-being in every life; yet, even while we enjoy these jubilant hours we know that they will end. To the soul that has learned to live there is no such fluctuation. Its joy is no transitory visitant, dependent on the weather or the balance at

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the bank. Its happiness is like a well of water, springing up into abundant life, refreshing, sweet and inexhaustible. It was this quality which the man of Nazareth called "blessedness."

Singers who have learned their trade are never, or almost never, hoarse. It is one of the common tricks of vocalism to "sing over a cold," and only the expert in the audience can detect it. Just so the one who has attained the art of the blessed life can endure the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune and live beautifully in spite of them. To such a character, misfortune may make some difference; but it can never make the life anything but true to pitch. Misfortune may mean pain; but it will not mean discord. Grief may dim some of the effulgence of our happiness, as indisposition occasionally caused Caruso to sing with less gorgeous tonal color than was his wont; but always there will be the song and always it will be beautiful.

We must be happy without the things we cannot have and we must be happy with the things we would fain be without. To suppose that any equipment of material possessions or any escape from the responsibilities of such possessions will make us love life better is to make a common but egregious mistake. Happiness comes to rich and poor on identical terms. The art of life consists in living as we ought to live, as we must live, and at the same time in being contented with what has

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been given us. To evade a single task that should be done is to subject ourselves to the invariable discontentment of the indolent; to seek escape from any pain that we should bear is to cheat ourselves of our opportunity to grow strong in adversity; to refuse to tread the path that is rough and narrow is to confess defeat and weakness and to lose all chance of happiness, because it involves the sacrifice of self-respect. He is most likely to be happy who sees things as they are, who makes no attempt to deceive himself, who does his work as well as he can and who knows that life is worth living on the terms on which it offers itself to him. When such a seeker after the abundant life heeds the call of the Christ to come unto Him and learn, he will not fail in his desire to enter into the life of abiding peace.

WHAT IS YOUR INCOME?

WHAT is your income? Once each year the government asks you that question. You look into your accounts, consult your banker, argue with your conscience and, at last, make due rendering unto Cæsar. But what is your real income? What, from among the riches of the world, really comes in to you? Money does not. He who would keep his life uncorrupted must guard its inner portals from the intrusion of money. Not money, but the love of it, is said to be the root of all evil. It does us no harm so long as we bid it keep its distance; but when it touches our affections, it ruins us.

What, then, do we take unto ourselves? What is our real income? On this April morning, spring is diffidently announcing herself. A robin outside my window, perched high in a new-budded tree, sings the opening solo, announcing the theme of the summer symphony. As I stand here, filled with that exalted contentment that comes to us at such times, a child comes into the room, takes my hand and stands beside me, looking out and listening. The robin has somehow reminded me of the first notes of the *Eroica* and his high treble is backed by Beethoven's profound chords, which

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come surging into memory, so clear and differentiated that one might take pen and paper and write them down. Such are the luminous experiences of life. This has been only a minute, but it will fill the day with satisfaction.

Such things as these make up our real income. It was one of the purposes of Christ that we should have life more abundant. Part of the divine good news was the revelation, seen clearly as never before, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" and that he who seeks the highest, need not be anxious for what he shall eat and drink or wherewithal he shall be clothed. The gospel of the abundant life was to be the possession of the poor and was to fill their lives with blessings better than worldly wealth. In gaining new gifts from God they were to be victorious over their poverty and were to be rich in the inner man. Paul, writing to his friends at Corinth, says, "Now ye are full; now ye are rich," though it is certain that they were, for the most part, poor people, even slaves. He speaks of his own work as the task of one who, being poor, yet enriches many. He speaks of the "riches of his grace," "the riches of his goodness," "the riches of wisdom and knowledge," "the unsearchable riches," and "the riches of glory." "I know thy poverty," says the writer of Revelation, "but thou art rich."

These are the riches of the inner self. We are

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commanded to lay up treasure in heaven and be rich toward God. Surely it is in that kingdom of heaven which is within ourselves that we store our treasure. There have been pious men who thought that the command to lay up treasure in heaven had reference to some system of accounting, carried on by angelic bookkeepers who, with the proper celestial equivalents of loose-leaf ledgers, high desks and adding machines, kept careful record of our doings. When you committed a sin you were charged with it; when you said a prayer, it was credited to your account; when, at last, you passed out of this life, according to this most logical and businesslike system, your book was balanced and, if you were found to be overdrawn in the matter of self-indulgence, you could not get into paradise until you had worked out your debt. The men who worked out that system of theology would doubtless have been efficiency engineers, if they had lived in this generation.

But Jesus had not any such idea. To lay up treasure, in his teaching, is to lay it up in your own soul. To be rich toward God is to be rich within. Marcus Aurelius, taking appraisal of himself, says, "Flesh, breath and inner life, that is all." But that inner life! We all have flesh and breath and one is not greatly unlike another in this respect; but the differences between man and man in respect of the inner life are as the difference between darkness and light. "Wherefore," says

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Plato, "let a man be in good cheer about his soul, who has cast off the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to himself . . . who has arrayed his soul in her proper jewels, which are courage, justice, temperance, ability and truth. Thus adorned she is ready to go on her journey when her hour comes." He saw a man's possessions as properly having no vital relation to himself; they were alien to him. To see this clearly is to see a long way into the secret of a happy life.

The spiritual and moral graces of which Paul so often speaks as life's true riches, are not contained within the circumference of our material possessions, nor do they originate there. They are equally distinct from our physical selves. In spite of all we hear about the effect of mind on body and body on mind, we know that ill-temper and ill-health are quite separate things. A strong and healthy body is a precious gift; yet even this is not essential to a treasure-filled life. The roll of the saints is long and illustrious; yet it is to be doubted if it would furnish material for a single first-class football team. Our modern schools of psychology have rediscovered a fundamental truth, which Jesus and his apostles taught, and which is repeated dozens of times in the New Testament, namely, that the cure begins at the center, that the ills that afflict multitudes are but the manifestations of something wrong down at the core of our

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lives. In consequence, the method of psychology today is simply a scientific elaboration of the old injunction to seek first the kingdom of God and let all other things follow. Modern psychology is diluted faith. The cases which come to the door of the psychological practitioner are mostly people who have been careful about many things, as was Martha of old, and have forgotten the better part. They have gained possessions, they have fed and indulged their bodies, they have bought and sold and taken profits; but they are people like the ancient Laodiceans, to whom the seer said, "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Let us recall a few of the things which constitute our real income. Beauty is one of the delights which God made to enrich the inner life of man. The Greeks believed that there was immediate relation between the sense of beauty and the goodness of men. Certain it is that Jesus reveled in it and revealed it. If it is true that Rousseau was the first man to put green fields into the literature of France, it is also true that, centuries before his time, there was One who stood among the wild flowers on the Galilean hills and talked to men of the loveliness of God's green earth. To see these things is to be enriched with that which can never rust and which thieves can never break

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through and steal. "Blessed sun," cried Carlyle, "it is sent to all living and the whole wealth of the bank of England is not equal to one beam of it." His remark reminds us of that occasion, related by Plutarch, when Alexander, full of the pride of recent triumphs, came upon Diogenes enjoying the glory of the noonday. The great king condescended to the philosopher. Was there anything, he asked, that the mighty Alexander could do for Diogenes? "Yes," was the reply, "Alexander can step aside from between me and the sunshine."

We recall a passage from one of the books of George William Curtis, in which a shabby book-keeper moralizes during a country walk.

"Thank God, I own this landscape," said Titbottom.

"You?" I returned. "I thought it was part of Bourne's property."

Titbottom smiled. "Does Bourne own the sun and the sky? Does Bourne own that sailing shadow yonder? Does Bourne own the golden lustre of the grain or the motion of the wood or those ghosts of hills that glide, pallid, across the horizon? Bourne owns the dirt and the fences; I own the beauty that makes the landscape."

Every one of us is heir to the better part of those estates for the physical possession of which other men have sacrificed the best of life. Such riches are all around us. "The world," says

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Stevenson, "is so full of a number of things, I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings." We may admit that kings are not particularly happy people during these democratic days, but the truth of the couplet remains. Greed can never fence in the sunset nor set a claim on the beauty of a starry night. However, men may fall from grace and deface the works of the Creator, the poppies still bloom on the battlefields and birds still sing among the ruins. He is most safely rich who sees most clearly and most constantly that God made these things and that He made them for everyone who will learn to recognize them and make them his own.

The inner wealth of the soul is inexhaustible. It needs no thrift to lay it up and keep it. It creates and recreates itself. Time does not destroy it. Your library is full of the loveliness that has dwelt in the souls of men, that has enriched multitudes and yet is undiminished. Poetry, art and music are everywhere spread before the mind that has the power to discern. The price of the highest things in life is never too high for the humblest to obtain. When Beethoven wrote a symphony, he wrote for millions. Each who hears goes away enriched, yet the source of the enrichment is unabated. How many thousands have been filled with a new enjoyment of life by that "host of golden daffodils, fluttering and dancing in the breeze" which Wordsworth saw during an

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afternoon walk? The poet saw them and they withered away and decayed; yet they still are beautiful because they have passed through the treasure-house of Wordsworth's soul into yours. These things are income. These are riches that endure.

Sometimes the commonest things enrich life and make it fine when they are mingled with the magic of this inner kingdom. When I speak of the tails of horses and the entrails of sheep, no suggestion of beauty seems implied; yet these are the things by which a Kreisler, rubbing one substance on another, as the insects do, produces the tones which have been the delight of a generation of the lovers of violin music. Man takes the dirt of the ground, grinds it, mingles it with oil, smears it on canvass with a brush made of the bristles of animals, and behold, a Gainsborough portrait or a Corot landscape. Man takes a shapeless lump of stone and transfigures it into the glory of the Venus di Milo. He takes the common elements on which his feet have trodden and pours them into the mold of his dreams and the world is stocked with deathless loveliness. Surely, he who can make this beauty his own has come into possession of inexhaustible riches.

Truth is another possession of the soul. It comes down the ages, from a multitude of seeking and finding minds, who have left behind them an heritage for all their spiritual kindred. How poor

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the world would be without the host of men and women who have given their lives to the quest of God's own word! "The truth," said Jesus, "shall set you free." There is much boasting about freedom just now. The fashion of the times is to disclaim all restraint, renounce all allegiance and refuse to follow any master. As one contemplates the behaviour of a certain class of people to whom freedom means the putting off of self-restraint, he is reminded of the man, described by a popular humorist, who, being surprised in a nefarious act, "galloped madly off in all directions." There may be much romping about by the "vers libre" school, not only of poets, but of theologians, of political economists and of ethical philosophers; but if there be not truth behind it all, the liberty is a sham. Folly never made any man free.

Truth comes to us only when we have learned to learn. It is not mere fact of which we speak. The statement that a certain man is six feet tall may be true, but it is not truth in the sense that interests us now. Fact is sight. Truth is insight. It is that completed vision, which may be wanting in many details, but in which the whole of the broad landscape is revealed. A photograph is fact; an etching, suggesting, in its half revelations, the inner meaning of that which it portrays, is truth. And truth enriches us whether or not we ever know ourselves to have attained it. It was Leibnitz who said that he would not choose

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to have all things revealed to him because the joy of life was in the quest of the unknown. One radical difference between the higher and the lower quests is that in the second we are defeated unless we find and obtain, while in the first it is the desire to find that enriches us. We know very well that the man who sought for the pearl of great price would have had an interesting and satisfying life, even though he never found it. In these higher reaches of the soul we are enriched by what we seek more than by what we find. We are fed by our own hunger when we hunger for the things of God.

Humor is another goodly possession. It is a by-product of the search for truth. It belongs to those who love their kind. It is kin to kindness. The Bible says that a merry heart doeth good like a medicine. There is the empty, raucous laughter of the fool; there is the bitter sneer of the cynic; but humor is the expression of sympathy, of charity and cheer. The least acute of ears can detect the difference between the noisy cackle of the shallow-minded and the music of the wise man's laugh. It was said of Charles Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers of modern times, that he could keep a company of tired preachers in a gale of laughter at his Monday morning meetings. Henry Ward Beecher so bubbled over with fun, even in the pulpit, that he was obliged to exercise restraint lest he disorganize his congregations with laughter.

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One does not know of any gathering of men at which there is likely to be so much pure fun than a meeting of Christian ministers. Why is this? Is it because these men are released, for the time being, from the traditional solemnity of their calling? Is it not rather that they have looked deep into the heart of humanity and have found it good? If we have not the gift of laughter, there is poverty somewhere in our souls.

I have mentioned only a few of the many sources from which we may enrich ourselves. Need I remind you that all of these are but little streams that we need only to follow to their source to come upon the eternal springs of God's love? The quest for beauty will lead us at last to God, if we are faithful. The quest for truth will take us, at last, to the mount of transfiguration, where we shall behold the light of his presence and hear his voice. This is final and consummate fortune. Once there, we ask for nothing that earthly kings can give, save that they move their gaudy trappings away from between ourselves and the sunshine of his presence.

Each morning of your life you awake to the enjoyment of treasures which have nothing to do with the rise and fall of prices. Each morning is your opportunity to accept the heritage of which Paul so often speaks, the grace, the glory, the unsearchable riches, of God. Your house, your bonds, the money in your pocket shall not make

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you rich, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. "Somewhere, amid the immeasurable grossness and the slag, nestles the seed perfection." Somewhere the pearl of great price awaits you. You shall be rich if you will seek it. For him who would have the highest there can be no failure.

"Seek and ye shall find," he said. All those things to which Jesus directed the thoughts of men as he taught them the secrets of life are still about us. The birds of the air still sing, the black-winged raven and the sparrow still live though they have not toiled nor gathered into barns; the lilies still fill the meadow, arrayed in a glory unbought by the wealth of Solomon; the green and gold of the hillsides still turn the prudent toil of the husbandman into visions of beauty, against the day when the sickle shall be put in; the sower goes forth to sow and the shepherd to tend his flocks; the sky is just as blue today as it was then, and the mountain's shoulder still cuts sharply into the mystery of the distant firmament; the sun still blazes in his glory and the waters of the lake sparkle in the sunlight, rippling and breaking in tiny rushes upon the shore—all this is as it was when first He opened the eyes of men to the riches of the spirit and drew from every long familiar object of their world the lessons of the deeper life. But where is He? To some of you, perhaps, He has faded into dimming memories and His voice is but the

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echo of a day long past and half forgotten. Let Him be your income! "Behold," he says, "I stand at the door and knock. If any man open unto me I will come in unto him."

What is your income? How rich are you? Listen to the Apostle. "For all things are yours, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, the present, the future—all belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God."

How rich are you?

THE PRIDE OF POSSESSION

"THE conceit of Proprietie hardens a man against many inconveniences and addeth much to his pleasure: The mother abides many unquiet nights, many painefulle throwes and unpleasant savours of her childe upon this thought, It is my owne. The indulgent father magnifies in his owne sonne, that which hee could scarce like in a stranger." These are the words of Bishop Hall, contemporary of Shakespere and writer of a classic volume of "Meditations and Vows."

Many of us would be happier if we would cultivate this "conceit of Proprietie." It can be overdone, of course; some people bore us with their insistent praise of all things that pertain to them, their children, their furnaces, the last pair of boots they bought, the cooking of their wives and the efficiency of their automobiles. Yet, though these folk are bores, we must admit that they are cheerful ones. If being well satisfied with what we have is ever a failing, it is an amiable one and easily forgiven. Too many people have quite the opposite failing and miss contentment by the habit of deprecating their own possessions. If you own a dog, it is both wise and charitable to

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magnify his cleverness and forget the fact that his ancestry is promiscuous.

- I have just purchased, for seven dollars, a tennis racket which is supposed to sell at thirteen. The salesman explained the low price by informing me that it was a "second." Close inspection would reveal in it, somewhere, a slight defect which prevents it being sold as perfect, though it detracts nothing from its effectiveness as a tool. We must all put up with "seconds" all our lives. We must be more than satisfied with them. We must learn to be happy while leading a marked-down life in the midst of second-rate people. Our preacher is second-rate, our school teachers are second-rate, our house was planned by an architect who was not quite omniscient and was built by slightly imperfect mechanics; our food is cooked by someone who does her imperfect best and our clothes are washed by ladies less than ideal. Our love is blind; yet even wife, husband or children seem to us, at times, to be not without their faults. Yet we can be proud of our faulty possessions, as I am proud of my tennis racket. I challenge my opponent to point out its defect and, if I can beat him, with his thirteen-dollar racket, the fact that I have done well with an imperfect instrument adds something to the victory.

In spite of the handicap of imperfection, wise men do their work and are happy. "If the iron be blunt," says the Old Testament, "then must he

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put forth more strength." There are few of us who are "completely furnished to all good work," yet good work we must do. With most of us resolution must take the place of equipment and industry must be a substitute for genius. Though the axe be dull, the tree must come down; we must not sit idle, sighing for a grindstone, while the fire dies for want of fuel.

It is with our own resolution and courage that we must make up for the want of perfection in our possessions. He who insists on all things being exactly right is a worry to himself and a nuisance to his neighbors. Any man may point out sixty things in an hour that are slightly wrong; only a fool spends his time doing it. Let a man see truly and he will see that to be human is to be imperfect; to be wise is to live, amidst imperfection, a useful and contented life, and to be religious is to do all this and yet keep clear the aspiration toward perfection.

To find pleasure in what we have, it is not necessary to have much. It is one of the commonest blunders of the seeker for felicity that he tries to fill life beyond its capacity. Christmas is supposed to be a happy time for children, and yet it is doubtful if there is a time in all the year when there are more cross and cranky children in town than on Christmas afternoon. The reason is that the day has been too full. Giving a child too many toys will turn his temper, just as giving him

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too much candy will turn his stomach. So it is with us older children who have come into possession, not of drums and dolls, but of houses and automobiles. We miss happiness by supposing that we can attain it by making life a kind of continuous Christmas-tree. By having too much we render ourselves unable to take delight in what we have.

Everyone should own something. The man who attaches to himself no possession in which he can take pride is not wise. Proprietorship is an elemental instinct which ought not to be denied. One may have too much to be a good citizen, or one may have too little. There are few so poor as to be unable to own something in which a proper pride of possession can be felt, something that is the best of its kind. Young couples, beginning housekeeping, will do well to avoid buying trash, even as they do well to avoid possessions which are extravagant. A fifteen hundred dollar piano in a cottage is a folly; a two hundred dollar piano is equally a folly. The one is too expensive for poor people; the other is too cheap for anybody. There are times when it is wise to indulge ourselves in something good. I am writing these words with an expensive fountain pen. I could do as well with a two-dollar one; but it happens that I take great satisfaction in having a fine pen, and satisfaction, at such a price, is well bought.

The decent pride we have in that which is our

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own should extend to our daily work. I have an acquaintance who sells shoes. Now it is my idea that a shoe salesman has as temper-trying an occupation as any man. He must listen all the long day to the same protestations about sizes, the same comments on how long the last pair lasted and the same particulars as to those painful pedal exuberances which man attains in his devotion to civilization. He must go over the same old arguments about height of heel and width of toe. And all this time he is prostrated before his customer like a devotee before his idol. But my shoe-selling friend dismisses all this. To him, the putting of shoes on people's feet is a fascinating art. He has studied the anatomy of the foot. He knows leather from hide to shoe-box. He is a Shoe Man, utterly competent in his business, and he is proud of his vocation, as he has a right to be. How much more does this man get out of his daily work than the man who tolerates his business only because he earns money by it! There is not one of us who cannot build up, by the cultivation of interest and the attainment of skill, the same "conceite of proprietie" in regard to whatever work we do.

None may be happy who expect too much. Discordant households are frequently those in which the members of the family expect each other to be more than human. Men who are unhappy in their daily occupation are usually so because they expect

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from it more than an opportunity to earn a decent competency by the sweat of their brows, or their brains. Hard, faithful work wins us something short of what we want—let us take in that truth and learn to live with it comfortably. They are happy who learn to do the best they can with what they have. A lady with a second-rate house, a second-rate husband, some less than perfect children, a circle of friends subject to human frailties, living in a second-rate town in a second-rate climate may yet manage a happy life if she will but realize that this second-rateness is a part of humanity, that there is but one perfect being and that is God, and that He is too merciful to demand perfection. If she will do without the things that she cannot have and make competent use of that which she does have, if she will abstain from cluttering her house with useless trash and filling her days with futile occupations, she will have time and thought for the true art of living and as the years ripen her in wisdom she will find happiness.

They are most likely to be happy who learn to keep their lives clear of unprofitable possessions and to keep a "conceit of proprietie" in those things which form their necessary environment. We need not be boastful of our lot in life, we need not expect that others shall admire our homes and wives and children, or even ourselves, as much as we do; but we can be contented and teach ourselves to overlook the imperfections that cannot

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be helped. If a man's wife has a crooked temper, he may take thought as to how it may be improved; if she has a crooked nose, he'd best learn to appreciate its novelty. He who is proud of his wife and children, who thinks his home the right kind of a home and who believes his daily occupation to be the foundation of all human well-being is likely to have a great deal of kindness and charity about him. He is a better husband and father, a better citizen and a better Christian than the grumbling critic who holds at a discount everything the good God has given him.

"And," continues the good Bishop, "if wee could think, It is my God that cheereth me with his presence . . . my Saviour is at God's right hand, my Angels stand in his presence: It cannot be, but that God's favour would be sweeter, his chastisements more easie, his benefits more effectual."

BETWEEN DREAMS AND VISIONS

“Your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions,” says the Prophet. But what of the men of middle age? The youth of twenty, looking into the future, is stirred by the glowing visions that fill the horizon of the years and he exults in the triumphs that lie before him. The old man, musing by the fire, dreams quietly of the days that are gone and his soul is tranquil as the images of past joys fill his memory. But what shall be the inspiration of the man of forty-five, who has passed the time of glowing visions and has not yet come to that of quiet dreams? He has no time for anything but the rough practicalities of life. He must work, keep the bills paid, support his family, forget his weariness and fulfil his responsibilities. The world rings with the eloquence of those who celebrate, advise and execrate the younger generation and, from Cicero down to the latest of our amiable essayists, there has been no want of meditation on the beauties of old age; but who ever thinks of writing poetic literature about people who are fat and forty? Father and mother are simply taken for granted. We need not be surprised when the Prophet leaves them out of the picture.

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The ordinary man of middle age is not a romantic figure. He is preoccupied with business. He is a little disappointed with life. Time has passed, opportunity has slipped by, and he is little advanced toward the fulfilment of his visions. He is just one of the millions of men who are on the threshold of the second half of life, doing their best to keep things going. He has a home and a family. He owns a hundred feet of garden hose, an electric washing machine and a fair to middling automobile. He manages to pay the premiums on his life insurance and to support his family respectably. But for dreams and visions he has no time.

It is with something of a shock that one realizes that he has entered on the second half of life. Madam Recamier, a famous beauty in her day, says in her memoirs, "From the day when I saw that the little Savoyards no longer turned round to look at me in the street, I knew that it was all over." Undoubtedly the discovery was followed by some less than happy meditation. Yet middle age ought to be the time in which contentment deepens into blessedness; it should witness the ripening of character, the conscious competency in the art of living which can never be attained save by the lessons of the years. The pity is that it is so often the time of spiritual decline, when the soul is submerged amidst a petty world of material cares. The bright visions of the boy have given

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place to the drab realities of commonplace existence. Later on, the old man shall look back on these unlovely things and distance shall lend enchantment to the view; but today he sees them in the hard sunlight, with every imperfection exposed.

It is largely on the middle-aged that the responsibility rests for managing the affairs of the world. They have lived long enough to acquire skill and not long enough to lose their powers. Here and there we find some precocious youth managing great enterprises and, here and there, an octogenarian delights us with his courageous continuance in the fight; but it is on the men and women of the middle years that the greater part of our affairs depend. In the Old Testament account of the restoration of the temple we read that the people raised their voices as they beheld the foundations of the new house of the Lord. No doubt the young men uttered what was the ancient Jewish equivalent to a cheer; but we are told, "Many of the priests and Levites and chief fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice." These old men were dreaming dreams of the past while the young ones saw visions of the future; but it was doubtless the middle-aged men who had done the work. They stood by, leaning on their tools,

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while tears and cheers expressed the feelings of their fathers and their sons.

With their entrance on the forties most men come to the time when they have laid the foundations of their fortunes. It is at this time that they fall into the error of believing that the best part of life is behind them. There are experiences, common to most middle-aged men and women, which make this deadening assumption seem true. At this time of life a man may conclude that he has attained as much skill in his business as he is likely to attain. He has begun to weary of some of the things that fascinated him in youth. He may come to be satisfied with his own limitations and accept the fact that the world is not his oyster, after all. Intimations of mortality begin to appear. His fifteen year old boy proves more than a match for him in some athletic exercise. Sometimes he tries to avoid the inevitable conclusion. He begins to dress with studied youthfulness. He makes strong resolutions to take more exercise, convincing himself that all he needs is a bit of conditioning. Then the doctor becomes inquisitive, takes blood pressure and advises more careful diet and some self-denial with tobacco. So symptom follows symptom, until at last he is compelled to confess that it is with him as with all mortals. He has neither the care-free, insolent attractiveness of youth nor the serene venerability of obvious old age; he is merely middle-aged, growing a bit

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paunchy and a bit grey and often a good deal discouraged.

Yet the man of character, whose quest is for high things and whose faith is in the highest, will at this time enter into the most productive period of his life. His realization that life is short will stimulate all the powers of his mind and soul, so that he shall bring to ripe fruition the stored-up skill and wisdom of the first half of his career. It may be true that some few men and women do their best work in their youthful years. John Morley says, concerning Wordsworth, that the "ode composed on the evening of extraordinary splendor and beauty" is the one exception to the dictum that all his good work was done in the decade 1798 to 1808. Wordsworth lived more than thirty years after that period. His own critical sense must have told him that the best of his work was done. It may thus be the fate of some of us to watch the departure of whatever gifts we have, while yet in middle life; but it is not so with most men. No man would trade the plays of Shakespere's later years for those of his youth; nor the sounding epics of Milton, composed when youth had gone and blindness was upon him, for the imaginings of any gifted boy. If we were to gather the greatest works that men have accomplished in any field of endeavor, we should doubtless discover that the fruitful time of life is in the years past forty. As one realizes that he has en-

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tered this period of life, between youth's visions and the dreams of age, let him feel that this is the time of harvest which was promised. No man loves to lose his figure or watches without regret the departure of his hair; but wise men know that at the very time these disquieting events take place, the powers of the mind and spirit are at their best. In youth the wise man sows, in middle life he shall gather, in old age he shall enjoy. Let him see that now he is full-grown, skillful, competent in the things which make mankind supreme among the creatures that people the earth. He may be less an athlete than he was; but he is more a man.

If neither visions nor dreams are to tint the landscape of life for the man of middle-age, it must be that he shall find his joy in seeing things as they are. He, of all men, must look life in the face, courageously. The practical, concrete responsibilities are his. He must keep the pay-roll going and pay the rent. As to the essential meanings of his own life, he must not be deceived; nor must he deceive himself. It was Butler who said, "Things are what they are and the consequences of them will be what they will be; why should we deceive ourselves?" Matthew Arnold added, "To take in and digest such a sentence as that is an education in moral veracity." With our entrance on the second half of life we should have learned to take truth without discount or embellishment,

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and to live with it happily. As a man grows out of the period when his medicine must be sugar-coated, so he ought to grow out of the mental immaturity in which he wants the facts of life sweetened before taking. He must deal competently and faithfully with the commonplaces of existence, occupying himself largely with rent and taxes and Willie's shoes; and yet he must be courageous enough to labor for these uninspiring necessities during all his waking hours without losing his belief in the essential loveliness of life.

We must guard ourselves against that tendency to stop growing, or even wanting to grow, which is the cause of the failure of so many men's careers. Many promising young men never fulfill their promises because they come to the middle of life and quit. Tastes become fixed, habits become inflexible, prejudice supplants thought and the whole life turns to mechanical routine. It is related that at the inauguration of a President, a certain Bishop was observed sitting on the platform with an expression of deep profundity on his face. "The Bishop seems to be thinking," remarked a by-stander to his companion. "The Bishop is not thinking," was the reply. "The Bishop never thinks; the Bishop is simply rearranging his prejudices." There must never come a time in our lives when we cease to add to our powers of understanding. "Still Learning" was

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the motto printed on all the books of a wise and productive American teacher.

The responsibilities of middle-age ought to make us more interested in more things than we ever were before, for it is the nature of life to bring to us ever-widening horizons. At eighteen a man was a student. His whole life was expressed in his interest in his school and, generally speaking, he was as like his fellow students as one canary in a cage is like the others. But now, at forty, he may be a merchant; he may also be an ornithologist, the owner of an automobile, a householder, a director in a charitable institution, a deacon in a church, a stockholder in a railroad, the father of a family, a member of a country club and interested in a number of other things, each with its incentives to the acquisition of knowledge and each with its privileges and obligations. The interests of his life have broadened and now touch circle after circle of his fellow men. Far from becoming narrow in his views and prejudiced in his opinions, a man at this time of life ought to be a citizen of the world in the best sense, and, to him as to the ancient Roman, nothing that is human should be foreign.

Surely this is the time in life for one to take thought. Where are you going? In what direction does your life tend? Youth is behind you; old age is ahead. What kind of an old age shall it be? Just ahead may be some big smashing mis-

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fortune. How will you meet it? Will your manhood collapse or will you march manlike through the storm to shelter and security? Just ahead the crucial temptation of your life is waiting. What will you do? Just ahead death casts a shadow before you and, passing through it, you will step out into the unseen. With what courage, what expectation, what assurance shall that step be taken? These questions must be answered and this is the time wherein we ought to answer them. Between dreams and visions we are given time to deal with life's realities.

I suppose that when Jesus called to the weary and heavy laden to come unto Him and find rest, most of His hearers were middle-aged men and women. They were the tired business men, the weary slaves and the harassed mothers who were so crowded with life's daily duties that they longed for a time of surcease. The remark of the duty-worn mother, that when she got to heaven she intended to do nothing but rest for the first thousand years, will be understood by many a woman who is in the midst of the mother's task of caring for a family. When a "pulpit committee" asks me about some prospective occupant of their pulpit, I expect them to inquire diligently about his success in ministering to the young, and they invariably do so. I sometimes wonder if the most important of all ministries is not to the middle-aged. Surely it is in these mid-years that men and

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women need the strength and consolation of the faith as desperately as they ever need them. It is at this time that the world is with them more persistently than at any other period of life, and it is now that the disproportion between strength and duty is often greatest. They have neither the anticipations of youth nor the memories of age to dwell upon; they are in the incessant hurry and anxiety of practical affairs. If they should stop, the business of the world would stop, for it is the middle-aged man who does most of our buying and selling, our lawmaking and our manufacturing, and it is his wife who bears the responsibility of training up the coming generation.

One needs to be on guard against what he may persuade himself to regard as the disillusionments of middle-age. Cynicism is always a confession of failure. He is a sad man whom worldly experience has taught the price of everything and the value of nothing. When the abandonment of our youthful fancies means a descent into a sneering skepticism regarding those things which have kept alive the faith of men and we curl the lip at everything which purports to be pure and lovely and of good report, we have made poor use of our experience. That man is most likely to be happy who has learned to look at things as they are, to love them for their own sake and to know that there is a value in them that transcends the common view. He understands that they are less than

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perfect; he clearly sees the tinsel and the dross and yet experience has taught him that a thing may be mingled with alloy and may turn out differently from what he has expected and still be more precious than he had ever dared to hope.

That deeper happiness, called blessedness, is an attainment of the second half of life, rather than the first. The happiness of the very young is the happiness of innocence and inexperience. It is a carefree, irresponsible effervescence, like that of the bird that makes the morning musical in spring-time. The more solid kind of happiness comes later, after men have learned and toiled and suffered and come to know the value of things. In youth there is a barbaric yawp that may be called laughter; but it wants quality; it is not quite convincing; men really learn to laugh in middle life. It is then that hearts are merry and that life, if we have used it well, enfolds us in friendliness and peace. It is easy to be serious, to pull long faces and to shake the head. A hundred men may be found able to write solemn sermons or statesman-like editorials to one who has the gift of transcribing a happy humor into print. That is why humor is not a gift of youth; like wisdom, it wants time to ripen it. Youth is serious and, dismissing the real affairs of life as frivolous, it devotes itself with solemnity to trifles. That is why boys in high school take football more seriously than they do mathematics and why they scoff at things

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their fathers know to be the foundations of success. That is why immature minds are so attracted by speculations and contentions concerning the unknowable, while they utterly neglect the revelation that is shining all around them. The power to discriminate, to know the difference between gold and dross and to know when dross is more beautiful than gold, comes later, and then it is that men learn to laugh.

So blessedness comes with middle life, when we have ceased to expect that life shall be all sunshine and to fear that it shall be all cloud, when we have learned to live with our unsolved problems and be happy in spite of them, when we have tried our faith and found it valid and have tried our friends and found them true, when we have seen all the evil that men can do and all the base metal that lies beneath life's gilding and yet have kept our spirit sweet and our trust undaunted. When we have learned to mingle in the cup of life laughter and tears, toil and rest, disappointment and fulfillment, and make a satisfying draught of all, then does blessedness begin.

A LOOK IN THE MIRROR

"GRAY hairs are here and there upon him and he knoweth it not," says the prophet Hosea. Or, he might have added, if he knoweth it he treateth it with dye or jerketh it out and teacheth himself to believe that he is still but a youth. The prophet was speaking of a nation which wilfully blinded itself to the symptoms of its own decay. The disposition to blind the eyes to signs of decline is common to a multitude of otherwise sensible folk. We do not want to lose our youth and we fight off the encroaching signs of middle age as long as we can. Edersheim tells us that the ancient rabbis made it a law that no woman should look in the mirror on the Sabbath day, explaining that the prohibition was imposed because, if she looked in the mirror and saw a gray hair, any woman would be sure to pull it out, thus offending gravely against the sacredness of the day.

There are few more disquieting moments than those which follow the discovery of our first gray hairs, or the first occasion when our wives inform us that, despite the art of the barber, our bald spot is beginning to shine forth like a good deed in a naughty world. Perhaps one of them is that dread day when, for the first time, a man hears himself

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referred to by some thoughtless child as "that old man." By the time we touch the first forties, we ourselves have learned never to call any man old until he is somewhere within reach of eighty, thus encouraging ourselves in the continuing illusion of our own youth. Peter Pan was by no means the only boy who has refused to grow up. Ask a boy of eighteen his definition of a young man and ask his father of fifty and you will get significantly different answers.

What will you do on that portentous day when, hovering before the mirror with a properly modest appreciation of your charms, you discover that your hair is whitening, or disappearing, far faster than you supposed? You may do as a well-known American editor did. A friend met him on the street in London one day and was astonished to observe that he had shaved off his moustache. "Why in the world did you do that?" he asked. "Well, to be honest," was the answer, "the damn thing was getting gray." That is one way to treat the signs of departed youth. We can pull out the gray hairs, shave off the tinged moustache or buy a bottle of dye and fool our friends, for a time; but the course of nature will go on just the same and youth will insist on being left behind. Nor can we play the part with success for more than a few years. Departed youth is never so pitiful as in a woman who persists in dressing like her grandchildren, or a man of fifty who strives pa-

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thetically to show the world that he is still a gay young dog.

But despite our dislike for them, there are things more serious than gray hairs. The man is fortunate who is reminded of the approach of middle-age by nothing worse than a few streaks of white. I remember walking upstairs to the banquet room of a New York hotel with an eminent preacher some years ago. As we came to the landing he paused to recover his breath. "I don't know if it is because I am fifty years of age," he said, "but somehow I can't do this kind of work as easily as I used to." A few months later he was dead. For ten years he had been gradually slipping into physical bankruptcy, yet he made no change in his habits and took what his physician told him only half seriously. It was not because he was fifty years of age that his body failed him, but because, being fifty, he still spent himself as if he had been a healthy man of thirty. He had refused to see the signs of warning nature was setting in his path.

It is possible to postpone the frailties of old age, or at least to prevent their coming on us too soon. It cannot be done with the dye-bottle or the tweezers; it is a matter of careful thought and adaptation. Let the man who would preserve his physical vigor as long as possible deny himself and exert himself as any physician will direct him; let him realize that he is past the time when excesses

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leave no trace behind and that he must now apply intelligence and self-control to his daily life, and though his birthdays still insist on coming, they will find him prepared and will bring him wisdom instead of weakness.

The Prophet, however, was thinking of the moral and religious life when he made his observation. The unconscious deterioration of men and women in spiritual power is a more costly thing than their tendency to premature physical failure. We are willing that fifty should have less physical resiliency than twenty-five; but why should fifty be less ardent for the truth? Why should our moral convictions grow flabby because a few years have passed? We do not expect gray hair to adorn a champion athlete; but a hoary head should be a crown of glory to any man or woman who has lived through the years with the accruing moral power that is the mark of true experience.

The decline of the moral powers steals on us even more insidiously than does the waning of our physical strength. We all know that our bodies wax old, or if we forget it, some physician will jog our memory the first time we fall ill and will make disquieting experiments with heart action and blood pressure. But spiritual senility steals upon us with no outward sign. We slip back imperceptibly and our spiritual doctors, though they may see our plight and long to tell us, are not often called into consultation.

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It is told of a famous Scotch preacher that he used to put his hand on a boy's head and ask, "Well, laddie, how is't wi' your soul th' morn?" It would be well for many a man and woman in middle life if someone could bring them to serious consideration of that question. We ask each other about business and about physical health; but any interest in the welfare of our friends' immortal selves is not to be expressed in polite conversation. As we increase in years we ought to grow in moral power and in spiritual competency. The years should not rob us of our character. There should be no sagging of our spirit as youth departs. One can predict what your body will be when you are seventy; it will be less resilient, less resistant, weaker than it is at forty. But what will your moral and spiritual life be? Whither are you tending in these deeper parts of your nature? There is no greater tragedy in human life than the decay of the character with increasing age. Nothing is less glorious than the hoary head when not found in the way of righteousness. The people in the books of George Eliot seem all to deteriorate as they grow older. Did the author believe that old age and moral perversity grow on men together? With many who have given promise in the years of youth it has undoubtedly been so. Had Henry the Eighth died at the age of thirty, he would have been counted a bright star in the galaxy of English monarchs, but with middle-

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life he lost the vision of his kingship and fell into those evil ways which have made him a byword of history. How differently men would think of Benedict Arnold had he died in early middle-age when he still held and deserved the esteem of his countrymen. Had you died ten years ago, would men remember you more reverently than they would do if your soul were required of you this night? Let us look at ourselves honestly, that we may know how the passing years are leaving us. There will be no achievement of true happiness to the man who falls into moral bankruptcy in midlife.

"De Profundis" was written by Oscar Wilde. It is the heart-broken confession of a man who passed down the road of life, careless of his destination, a man gifted with great talent, but without the gift of moral strength. So from high distinction he fell into deep disgrace and dishonored death. The book is a thing of blood and tears and tragedy. "Desire at the end was a malady or a madness or both," he writes. "I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer captain of my soul and did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace."

Such tragedies happen, not in youth but in middle-age. We talk of the temptations of youth; but they are not to be compared to the temptations that come to men and women when youth is just past. At this time we are thrown on our own

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resources. We are our own masters. Our old guides have passed on to the beyond and our old loyalties are but memories. At this time we have command of our own lives and can do what we will. Many middle-aged people find themselves with more money than they have ever had before, and then the temptation to indulge in what money will buy faces them. Domestic happiness is wrecked most often in the forties. Divorce is a middle-aged affair. Habits become not only fixed but tyrannical. Men smoke too much, drink too much and eat too much in these years when they should be gaining greater knowledge of themselves and greater skill in self-control.

It is at this time that we abandon the bright hopes of youth. The realization of our own limitations comes upon us. We can never fulfill our dreams. We have come thus far on the journey of life and, behold, what we took for sparkling waters we discover to be but the dry sands of the desert. Disappointment with life is common at this period. Our copy-book maxims have not proved adequate. We doubt whether honesty be the best policy when we see the dishonest prosper. Our faith in the moral law wavers and even if we do not abandon our principles we are tempted to doubt their finality. We become morally tolerant and cease trying to set the world right. Losing our moral vision, we persuade ourselves that we are becoming worldly wise. The old ardor for

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the things of the spirit, and for the redemption of life, leaves us and we tell ourselves that in yielding to indolence we have put on the mantle of charity.

“Fight a good fight!” That call rings out in the Bible again and again. If you feel inclined to enter on a middle-age of easy compliance, be warned that this is the way of spiritual decay. We must keep the element of resistance in our lives, lest we lose our manhood. You cannot make a story unless you begin with conflict and carry it on to the issue of conquest or defeat. Nor can you make a life on any other terms. If you are not fighting, you are not living. If you have settled back into the softness of your nest, you are beginning to die.

There are hosts of unhappy, discontented middle-aged people with whom there is nothing wrong save that they are too comfortable. They kill their bodies with rich food and easy chairs and they destroy the soul with self-indulgence. They need the element of attack and resistance. If they would be happy they must, like the patriarch of old, go to grips with the messenger of the Almighty and keep on wrestling until they get their blessing.

Is life becoming a bore to you? Are people increasingly uninteresting? Do simple amusements grow staler and staler? Are irritations more and more frequent? You blame the people

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around you for such conditions. The town is not what once it was, the neighbors are not as congenial as they were a dozen years ago. You wonder why it is that your relations with your wife or your husband are less warm and intimate than formerly. The preacher has grown prosy of late. You spend your time in church thinking of business or of golf. You have ceased to count in the best life of your community. The whole round of spiritual privilege has become dull and uninteresting. Do you realize that the reason for all this is in yourself? Consider whether you are not becoming morally and spiritually flabby. Just as your girth has increased and you have put on soft flesh, which indicates not health, but self-indulgence, so your moral force has been undermined by want of exercise and you allow yourself to be drawn into things which once your soul abhorred. Isn't it time that you pulled yourself up?

To let the years despoil us of our courage and our faith is the most ignominious of all failures. One may lose his money and get it back again, but he who squanders character in the years of middle-age has lost that which is harder than gold to regain. We need to be warned lest we allow ourselves to be stricken with a kind of sickness which is worse than any physical disease. "I don't know if it is because I am fifty years of age," remarked my friend as he climbed those stairs. No, it was not because he was fifty years of age. The real

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reason was that he had preferred ignorance when any one of a dozen physicians within ten minutes' walk of his home would have warned him. He had been eating too much, smoking too much, exercising too little, disregarding the needs and demands of a body that had been wearing itself out in a busy professional life. It is so that thousands of middle-aged men destroy the priceless gift of physical health by obstinate neglect. And it is equally true of us in our treatment of our immortal selves. The Great Physician would teach us to keep young and vigorous in that life of lives that is of the spirit. Amid the responsibilities of middle life the cultivation of our spiritual selves is even more important than it was in youth. Let us then look to ourselves. Your wife peers into the mirror with anxiety expressed in every feature as she searches for gray hairs in her head and you have taken, of late, to reading advertisements of correspondence courses in physical training. But what of that which transcends the body? Do men think of you as one who once could be depended on for help in the promotion of good endeavors, but whose name must now be regretfully erased from the list of those who count? Are you a better man or a worse, with the passing of the years?

"Be not weary with well-doing." Of all the misadventures of life, the heedless retrogression our pious fathers called backsliding is the worst.

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It is to him who, year after year, holds fast to those things which are good, to him who endures through the labors and temptations of a busy life, to him who keeps the faith through all the vicissitudes of earthly fortune that the crown of life belongs. It is this man who shall go down into a green old age. "His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

A DEFENSE OF DISORDER

GREATNESS is never neat-minded. One's mind revolts at the thought of Samuel Johnson in meticulous linen, white spats and a monocle, or of Abraham Lincoln in anything but an attitude of careless indifference toward the minutiae of self-adornment and deportment. We do not want our heroes to be dandies, either in dress or in manners. There is little comfort in a house wherein order and correctness come first in consideration. The living-room of a home should be easy, like an old pair of shoes. A good house-keeper and a good homemaker differ in that one thinks of the house while the other cares for the people who live in it; one keeps the place neat and the other keeps the family comfortable. When a bed is "made" it is no place for sleeping; by the time we have relaxed and invited sleep the bed is usually well rumpled up.

Of course, we cannot get on without order, but neither can we get on without disorder. Conventions are invented for the purpose of getting small concerns out of the way without effort. When you meet a lady in the street, you go through a little ritual, raising your hat and bowing, and you pass on, having paid her a proper attention with-

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out disturbing the trend of your thoughts. If you were obliged, every time you met an acquaintance, to invent some greeting exactly appropriate to the occasion, you would soon take to the alleyways to save yourself from mental breakdown. The same thing is true of all our social contacts. What we call good manners is simply a convenient code of signals, indicating that we wish to be amiable toward our neighbor. A civilized man may bow; a savage may rub his stomach; it means the same thing. We have our little coins of conventional exchange in conversation, about the weather, the new poetry and each other's health. There are times when we want to plunge into real conversation, to discuss the unknowable, and, as that restless spirit, Gail Hamilton, once put it, to "poss the impossible"; but there are other times when it is restful to talk about the obvious, to make the stock remarks and return the stock replies. Tonight, at a thousand dinner tables the same observations about the present company, the weather, the bolshéviki and the latest novel will be made by ten thousand people and, when it is all over and they bid good-night to their hostess, they will be quite sincere, one and all, in remarking that they have had a *lovely* time. How tiresome it would be if they were obliged to tell her exactly, precisely, as Henry James might have done it, what kind of a time they have had.

But we are tempted to slip into the convenient

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track of convention overmuch. A life that is codified too much is in danger either of drying up and withering or of breaking out in some devastating violation of the moral law. We must preserve the power of spontaneous enjoyment of the passing hour and never give ourselves altogether to a set régime. With too many of us, duties and occupations through which we go mechanically fill our days. One day is like unto another and there is, for us, nothing new under the sun, because we have become too neat, too methodical and too indolent to attempt to know the unknowable or to "poss the impossible."

On one occasion, Jesus was talking about prayer. "Use not vain repetitions as the heathen do," he said. The people he has in mind have ceased to wrestle with mystery. They have poured life into a mold and have no living aspirations or compelling ambitions; so they give utterance to old thoughts and old wants supplied them by tradition. They express their religious convictions always in the same set of sentences and the longer they use them, the less they think about them. But, according to His teaching, religion can never be truly so expressed. It must not stiffen into convention, it must be a mercy that is new every morning, it must be as fresh and fragrant as the new-blown lily of the field.

The warning comes to us with equal force in regard to other parts of our lives. You may be a

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man of such regularity of habit that your neighbors set their clocks by your coming and going. You rise at a certain hour in the morning, emerge from the bathroom so many minutes later, sit down to breakfast and consume a certain number of slices of bacon and a certain quantity of coffee, every morning, year in and year out. You take your hat from a certain peg in the hatrack and emerge from your door at a certain minute, to go down town to business by a certain route. You spend the day going through the same motions you have gone through every day for fifteen years. You meet the same people, say good morning in the same tone, hang your hat in the same place, sit at the same desk and dictate letters in the same set of phrases. When lunchtime comes you go to the same restaurant and sit at the table with the same set of cronies. It is Tuesday, and you order what you have eaten every Tuesday as long as you can remember. One shudders at such a life when he really looks at it and realizes that it is more monotonous than the life of a sheep. As you regard your immortal soul, never let the pattern of your days become a mere conventional design, stiff, fixed, unnatural and unbeautiful. It is well to be warned.

How long is it since anything happened to you? The only adventure many people have is illness. Perhaps we had an attack of influenza. We talk about it more than Wellington talked about the

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Battle of Waterloo and our friends grow weary of hearing that it was fully six weeks before we recovered our strength. If one has sacrificed his vermiform appendix to the gods of surgical science, let him be silent, let it be a part of the unspeakable past, lest, every time he begins, "When I was in the hospital," his friends shall be tempted to wish that the surgeon had proved a bungler. Use not vain repetitions! Our friends grow weary of hearing about Susie, who is "such a nervous child—I don't know what I am going to do with her." They have heard quite enough about the puncture we had on our timid little automobile trip last summer, about the peculiar temperament of our furnace and the kind of coal we burn, and about the fact that we can't eat a thing for breakfast except a slice of toast. Surely life is poor when it contains nothing more worth a moment's thought than these things.

Some years ago a French clergyman published a widely read book on the Simple Life. One might make an equally useful contribution to the art of living with a work on the bromidic life, the life of vain repetitions, the life of ruts and habits, the life into which so many excellent people drift and become dead while they live. We can easily recognize the symptoms of bromiditus. When we have it we become like pianos, which always respond with a certain note to pressure on a certain key. In winter we say that we feel the cold less in the

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northern part of the country than we do here because "the cold is so dry up there." That illuminating meteorological observation is made on every cold day in every part of the country, from Texas to Minnesota. In summer we say that it is not so much the heat as the humidity that causes us discomfort. We look at works of art and say we do not know much about them, but we know what we like. In literature, we declare in favor of the happy ending because "there is enough sadness in real life without reading it in books." We become venders of proverbs and announce on every favorable occasion that two is company and three's a crowd, that boys will be boys, that it takes all kinds of people to make a world, that where there's a will there's a way, and that every cloud has a silver lining.

This is a condition of mental stagnation into which many otherwise intelligent people sink. They think and speak in patterns. With them complacency is always smug; pointing is always done with pride and viewing with alarm. They are the people who applaud most vociferously the set and uninspired speeches of the professional patrioteers. With them what actors call "sure fire hokum" is always good for a round of applause. When they go to church they like a sermon in which the preacher, who on Saturday has obeyed the scriptural injunction to take no thought for the morrow, repeats in order certain well-

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beloved and moss-grown phrases. Ah, they tell each other, this man preaches the Gospel! As if the Gospel of Jesus Christ could ever be conventionalized!

We need to remember that civilizations have sickened and died of conventions. Dead languages are languages which do not change and in which each word has crystallized into an invariable meaning. Live languages are those in which changes take place with each passing generation. Curiously enough, what purists call corruptions in language are, in fact, infusions of new life. They are like the new blood without which the strongest breed dies out. So with the lives of individual men and women. There must be constant openings of new avenues of interest, constant discoveries of new outlets for personality; the character must grow and change as all things that are alive must grow and change.

We should not spend our lives going through familiar, thoughtless motions, like a parcel of children doing calisthenics in a schoolroom. The dull mechanism of life-long, unbroken habit becomes a burden that deforms the soul, as the unchanged posture of a child at a machine deforms the body. It does not matter how much men may praise us for our skill in these conventional accomplishments. The very perfection we have attained in them makes them the more wearisome unless we have learned to relate them in some way to the

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ever-changing fortunes and needs of men. This is one of the reasons why religion so refreshes life—it ties the task to which our circumstances chain us to the whole heart-stirring enterprise of human service and world salvation.

Edwin Forrest, the tragedian, played the part of "Mazeppa" for many years. Whenever Shakespere failed him or the public proved cold to his newer undertakings, he had only to fall back on this play to renew his prosperity and fame; yet though the public gave him a fortune for playing the part, he hated it with the hatred of a man who is chained to a task from which he cannot escape. "An ingenious artist of our time," says Hazlitt in his table talk, "has declared that if ever the Devil got him into his clutches he would set him to copying his own pictures." When our spiritual vitality has so exhausted itself that there is nothing for us to do but copy our own pictures we may well be tempted to hate life.

We come, all too easily, to take ourselves and our circumstances for granted. We talk about our "disposition" as if it were a fixed and unchangeable thing. If we are pessimistic, nervous, critical, indolent or bad-tempered, we accept the fact as a man might accept bow-legs or a big nose. A time comes when we are in danger of ceasing to *make* ourselves, when we settle to certain habits, certain enjoyments, views of life, and limitations of endeavor. To take one's self for

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granted, as if all our history and environment had conspired to make us what we are, and we were helpless in the matter, is one of the commonest of the sins against self.

In every life there are certain occasions which should stimulate us to new powers. "Thy mercies," says the Psalmist, "are new every morning." God speaks to us in every new-born day inviting us to untried conquests. In every change that comes to our lives He urges us to build into ourselves new powers. Do you remember a boyhood or girlhood of poverty? The change in your circumstances has brought you a better house to live in, a better position in society, better clothes, more physical comfort in every way; but has it brought you anything else? As you gain a bigger income do you live a bigger life? Or if the reverse has been true, and you have declined from affluence to a pittance, has poverty brought you only privation and discontent or has it brought you some of its own peculiar insights and opportunities? As we pass from one period of life to another, there should be an ever-accruing ability to find, within the resisting crust of circumstances, the inner poem of existence. The abundant life is a life that never settles to the resigned reception of the endlessly dreary. In the kingdom of heaven, monotony is unknown.

As we must never take ourselves for granted, so must we never take God for granted. The

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Divine is endless variety. He endures in the adoration of man through all the vicissitudes of the centuries, because his beauty is as changeful as the beauty of a sunset. The boy sees in Him one life, the man another. With every accession of wisdom we see new meanings in the revelation of God. If religion has become a settled, uninteresting thing to you, then seek its truth in new fields. Find new tasks for the spirit, venture on new hopes, cultivate new aspirations, assimilate new truth, learn to see the force in new arguments, and to appreciate the value of new discoveries. If we must have any of the characteristics of childhood in order to receive the kingdom of God, surely we must have that exhaustless curiosity which is so invariably characteristic of the young.

When Jesus called us to himself, he called us to discipleship. A disciple is a learner. When we cease to learn, life has lost its savor. When the appetite of the mind is dulled and we no longer crave to know, we are more to be pitied than men who have ceased to relish material food. Isaiah said, "He wakeneth my ear every morning to hear as a learner." It is in that attitude of alert listening to new lessons that our middle years shall be made triumphant. "What are you doing now?" a man asked a retired Professor of Hebrew, who for forty years had been a specialist in Old Testament study. "I'm discovering the Old Testament," was the answer. It is just so that a busi-

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ness man may make discoveries in business, a professional man in his profession, a parent in his children. Any man or woman in the world may find in each new day a new adventure and in every rising sun a promise of new things. Middle-age becomes dull as dishwater because men cease to have expectations. The coming day allures us with no mystery. We know in advance just what is going to happen. We may get away from this deadly obviousness for a few hours by going fishing or playing golf—indeed, golf and fishing are middle-age sports mainly because they satisfy, for the moment, men's hunger for uncertainty. But those who are really caught in the machinery of the daily round can seldom afford even these temporary adventures. If they are to find zest again, they must find it in the same old setting. And it is there if only they will believe it.

"Use not vain repetitions," said Jesus. There are repetitions that are not vain. Some things cannot be repeated too often. But life must not be suffered to become a mere neatly arranged schedule of conventions, like a "living-room" made unlivable by an inflexible housekeeper. Let life be new and potent, however years have passed us by. Fling off the tyranny of petty habit. Unlimber the mind and unfetter the ambitions. Wear a different color, think a different thought, read a different kind of book, search the dictionary and find new words to use, surprise your palate with

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an unaccustomed flavor and you will find that even these mild adventures will add to the joy of living. If your existence loses, by the process, a little of its usual rigid order, count it all joy that you have released yourself from prison.

"But," you object, harking back to your beloved old saws, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks."

Yes, you can, my friend. That proverb was invented by some man who knew nothing about dogs. Besides, I am not talking about an old dog; I am talking about you.

OCTOGENARIAN ENTERPRISE

WE have heard of men who wanted the earth, but never of a man who got it. There is a story in the Bible, however, of a man past eighty who claimed what was, to his mind, a considerable part of it, and who got what he asked for. His name was Caleb. In the days of the wilderness wandering he was one of the trusted advisors of Moses. Now, at eighty-five, at a time of life when most men are preparing to die as peacefully as may be, he comes to Joshua with his request. "I was forty years old," he says, "when Moses sent me to spy out this land, and I brought him such word as was in my heart; and Moses promised on that day that this mountain should be my inheritance and the inheritance of my children. I am eighty-five years old, but I am strong now as I was then. Now, therefore, give me this mountain; and though it be full of giants and though the cities be great and walled, yet if the Lord be with me, I shall make it my own." Thereupon, we are told, "Joshua blessed him and gave unto Caleb, Hebron for an inheritance," and the old man made it so uncomfortable for the swaggering Anakim, who inhabited it, that they were glad enough to pack up and leave the mountain to the doughty old warrior.

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Of course, there is a bit of boastfulness in this old man. We may very justly doubt that he was really as strong in body and as keen of eye as he had been forty-five years before. After all, time does things to the human body; the joints stiffen; the vision dims; the arteries harden; the years take their toll of our physical nature; but, in Caleb, the indomitable spirit is still sovereign. The body may be old; but will and purpose have outlasted all the years. We rather like to see a little swagger in an old man. We enjoy his confidence in himself. The fine old fellow who retains the hearty freshness of his spirit, who refuses to lie down in ineffective senility, who laughs like a boy and who still enjoys a bit of a fight on occasion, is the man whose company we most enjoy. Youth has no freshness like that of unwithered age. Edward Simmons, the artist, writing when seventy years of age, says, "I do not wish to belong to my own generation. 'Whom the gods love die young' does not mean that they die when they are young but that they are young when they die, and I could ask nothing better from a generous creator."

What man is so interesting as the octogenarian whose eight decades of pilgrimage have left him still a lover of life and of his kind, still an optimist, still keenly alive to the events of today, still susceptible to the new idea, still holding fast to the things that time has proved to be good; but still

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interested in proving new things? John Bigelow, Mark Twain, Chauncey Depew, Charles Parkhurst, Elihu Root, Joseph Choate—these are a few of the fine old boys of recent years who have shed a light of hope and faith on their world long after they passed threescore and ten. One of the most charming characteristics of such men is their cheerful blindness to the fact that they are old. Like Caleb, they insist that the weight of years is nothing. One loves to dip into John Bigelow's tremendous tomes of more than a million words of reminiscence, realizing that he finished them when past ninety. We are told that when John Morley was Secretary for Ireland he was past seventy. Gladstone was eighty-four. Morley wanted to remove the President of a certain Irish college whose work was not satisfactory, and he finally wrote a letter directing the retirement of the man on the score of his being past the age of sixty-five. Lord Salisbury remarked, "I observe that the letter directing retirement because this college president is sixty-five is signed by a secretary whose is seventy-something in the name of a first Lord of the Treasury who is eighty-four." One can imagine John Morley's surprise and resentment that anyone should thus remind the world of a fact so irrelevant as the number of *his* birthdays.

Joseph Chamberlain said of his father, "He never rested. To his last day he seemed too

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young to leave things as they are." There is a pseudo-wisdom of old age which is a mere withdrawing from active participation in human affairs. Some old men become indolent by-standers, shaking their heads and reflecting that if all men were as old and wise as they, no one would get excited about anything. They no longer take sides, they live in a non-partisan attitude and they imagine that it is the wisdom of old age that explains their want of aggressive interest in the affairs of life. Old man Caleb was given to no such lazy self-indulgence. He felt responsible, at eighty-five, as he had been at forty, to fight the battles of the Lord. He sniffed the conflict from afar and, though age may have dimmed his sight, it did not diminish his enthusiasm.

Many old people would be happier if they would continue to be useful. It may very well be true that a man has reached the time when he ought to lay down some of his burdens; but he need not lay them all down. He need not cease to serve because he has grown too old to command. Here and there we see one who has grace sufficient to step down from the high place when increasing years make it advisable, and to take less exacting service. Why should one wear out his last days in rusty idleness when he could, if he would, do genuine service in some small place? There is no joy in sitting listless, trying to maintain the prestige of days that are gone. And may not we who

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are younger receive a hint at this point? In our solicitude for the aged we are often cruel, robbing them of all opportunity to be useful, discounting their wisdom, adopting an attitude of kindly patronage with them, when we might promote their happiness by laying on them such burdens as they are still well able to bear. There is probably no prouder moment in any man's life than that when in old age he has done a piece of work his sons thought could be accomplished only by the strength of youth. Joshua was wise and kind when he allowed Caleb to try, as he was doubtless surprised when he learned how well the old gentleman had succeeded.

If we are to learn how to be happy, we must learn how to lay up for old age. In that time to which we all hasten, we shall need not only a bit of money; we shall need also something to do and something for which to hope. The sixties, seventies and eighties are fine years for the completion of the conquests we conceived in the forties. It is in the forties that we lay the foundation for the second half of life. If Browning can sing, "Grow old along with me; the best is yet to be," it is because he labored in life's midsummer for the harvest of the autumn. It is interesting to observe middle-aged men giving sage advice to the young about taking thought for the responsibilities of middle life while they themselves squander in irrational living the heritage of their old age. A man

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must lay up something more than money; he must build within himself the resources of his future happiness.

The main difference between us is not merely that some of us have succeeded and some of us have failed; but that some of us have kept our dominant purpose alive and active and others have allowed it to die. The man who in the latter half of life fulfills the dreams of his youth is the man who never loses sight of his great intention. To him there is always one achievement more to be desired than any other, some one thing of which it is his constant thought, "For this cause came I forth." The thing that makes Caleb worth preaching about is not so much that he finally drove out the Anakim as that he never let go of his purpose to do so. It is this tenacity of intention that makes men great.

It is in middle life that we become conscious of our limitations and of the difficulties of the thing we dreamed of doing. We try once or twice or half a dozen times and fail. Then we say, "Alas, I am not fit to do the thing I thought to do. I am getting older, youth is past, I must accept defeat." A man finds that the cost of living is growing greater, that his responsibilities tend to increase faster than his income, that domestic cares occupy more and more of his thought. Circumstances seem to close in about him like a prison and gradually his courage flags. He becomes timid, tired

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and unenterprising. His life becomes insipid because the purpose which was the one thing that dignified his existence has been allowed to slip out of his thinking. "Once I hoped to do so and so," he says. "I was ambitious, but I find that the heights I chose were not for my feet and I leave them to abler men." So he sighs resignedly, suppresses the upward yearnings of his soul and lives on, a failure.

Another may climb no higher than he, but he never ceases to try. He is always a climber. His mountain is always before him and he sees it while he toils along the rugged valleys. Its conquest is not the outcome of an hour's consideration; his perseverance depends not on the day's casual choice. It is all the outcome of a life of valorous manhood. Forty-five years before the morning when Caleb went to Joshua, Moses had sent him with other men to spy out the land. Caleb was then a middle-aged man. When the spies returned, it was his voice that urged on the enterprise. While his companions melted the hearts of the people with their fear, he gave them new courage. It was because of his brave faith that they went forward to the promised land. So when he speaks today, at eighty-five, he simply speaks the words dictated by his life of two score years before. If old age is a time of whining pessimism, of lapsed interests, of broken friendships, of narrow prejudices and of soured faith, it is because middle age

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has somewhere failed. To lay up financial competence for a rainy day is only half our task; we must prepare for ourselves an inner source of cheerfulness which shall keep us from whining about the weather, the inconsiderateness of the young and the refusal of time to stand still.

The years pass and you admit that you are not as young as you used to be; but the mountain is still there, waiting for you. It is your mountain, the dream of your youth, the opportunity of your age. Why not make it your own in the time that is left? It is quite possible that you may fail; but you will be the happier for trying and continuing to try.

THE SOLVENT LIFE

THERE is a parable in the New Testament on the theme of solvency. "Which of you, intending to build a tower, doth not first sit down to count the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" One is tempted to use a mixed terminology when speaking of the solvent life, for it is difficult to penetrate into the causes of human bankruptcy and still keep clear the common distinctions between a man's money, his morals and his mentality. They ought not to be thought of as separated things. When the Apostle John prayed that all the concerns of his friend Gaius might be as healthy as his soul, he was praying for nothing more than a logical progress in the growth of a good man. No solvency is secure, whether of body or mind or business, which is not the outcome of a competent plan of life and the expression of a character that is sound. The fact that worthless people sometimes have luck is no argument against this generalization.

Mr. Micawber's celebrated dictum on the relation of financial solvency to happiness is undeniable. When you spend a shilling more than you get, you buy your self-indulgence, not only with another's money but with your own chances of a

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happy life. Bankruptcy, however, is not always a matter of self-indulgence. However industrious and self-denying a man may be; however rich and prosperous, he is never altogether immune to those accumulating mischances which may culminate in the bankruptcy courts. Like Antonio, in the Merchant of Venice, the most successful man in the community may easily come to disaster by taking for granted the soundness of his fortunes. "Ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land thieves and water thieves; and then there is the peril of the waters, waves and rocks." All these, to say nothing of Shylock himself who only waits for the occasion to exact his pound of flesh, are ever present perils in the path of the prosperous. A glance into the secret history of most great business firms would reveal times when they avoided a smash only by costly measures. Bankruptcy is a common disaster. Something like twenty thousand business failures will doubtless take place during this business year in this country and every community has its families who once were rich and who now live in a pathetic effort to keep up the old "position" on the bits of wreckage that were saved.

But the parable of Jesus relates to something more than money and business. It penetrates to the deeper self. If we may imagine a group of business men listening to Him as he expounds the necessity for a solvent life, so we may address

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ourselves now to those who understand the essentials of successful profit-making. For success in any field, or in all fields, must be gained by the same method, whether we seek it in building towers, selling dry-goods, painting pictures or achieving happiness. It will not come of itself; it must be the logical, the inevitable outcome of a clear purpose and a sound method. The world is strewn with human wrecks who have enjoyed a season of lucky prosperity but who, neither knowing nor caring for the underlying laws of success and failure, have come to ruin.

What are the ingredients of a solvent life? The first is capital. It is obvious that every business failure is chargeable at last to a want of that with which to pay for what has been bought. In one third of the business failures that take place this want of capital is the original cause—the people involved never had resources sufficient to make success a logical outcome. Had they been particularly fortunate, they might have succeeded, but they took long chances. A second cause of commercial failure is more or less general disaster, when one firm goes down and carries others with it. The third main cause is incompetency, a want of knowledge of those principles and details which alone give one a right to expect success. Other causes are misplaced confidence, personal extravagance and plain neglect; but the first three are

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responsible for three-fourths of the bankruptcy cases that fill the courts.

The same causes underlie moral and spiritual failure. The first great necessity is moral capital, which we call character. We live successfully in accordance with the wisdom and the self-denial with which we have laid up this capital in years past. Happiness is not an accident; it is an outcome. Back of every successful life there is accumulation. Just as a boy saves his pennies in order that he may buy a pair of skates from which he expects a return in pleasure, so men save and invest, in order that they may have what they want. This is understood by every man when he lays up money; but multitudes would be happier if they understood how closely it applies to the building up of the inner life. Character is the capital on which we do business in that realm where success means blessedness. Like material wealth, it is a cumulative thing; but, unlike money, each of us must get it for himself. Sometimes men are born in possession of great fortunes, which wait for them until the day when they shall be adjudged competent to manage and conserve them; but there are no trust companies to save our reputations or to build up our moral resources for us until we get ready to care for them ourselves. There are those who will guide us and help us; but only we can make our own character. We may be rich simply because our fathers were rich; but no man

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is good simply because his father was good. It is by the inner industry of the soul that we build up the capital of character on which life must be founded, and no man will make a success of life by laying up treasures on earth while he neglects the kingdom of heaven which is within. The first essential of solvency is that we shall build up and conserve our moral capital.

Unsuccessful merchants are usually poor buyers. When the receiver takes inventory of a bankrupt's stock he finds a large proportion of trash. It is exactly so in life. "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread?" cries the Prophet. Why load your life with worthless accumulations? How much of that which makes up your life is trash? What are you getting for the time you spend when you pass an evening in your habitual way? What kind of dividends will your habits pay in old age? "Prove all things," says Paul, "hold fast to that which is good." The careful merchant scrutinizes each article offered him. It must be worth the price, it must be salable and it must be of a character consistent with his chosen business policy. If he is unable to discriminate between shoddy and genuine goods, he will fail. If he loads his shelves with a meaningless mixture of unrelated articles, he will fail. I remember a man in a little mining town who saved enough money to set up as a peddler. He used to come to the door of the parsonage and call his

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wares, fresh fish, shoe-polish, green corn, axle-grease. One wondered where and why he collected such messes and one was not surprised to see him, before long, perched on the seat of the mill-wagon from which he had hoped to escape.

Our lives must be carefully and consistently stocked. One merchant's stock of five thousand dollars may furnish a fine business; another's of ten times the amount may be merely a collection of unsalable trash; five hundred books may be a library, five thousand may be merely a roomful of books; five rooms may be a home, forty may be an expensive curiosity shop. A man may fill ten hours a day with activity and do nothing; another may, like Herbert Spencer, be limited in his task to a few hours a day and yet accomplish work at which the world marvels. It depends on the intelligence and skill which we apply to the enterprise of living. If a man plays cards for two hours after luncheon with his cronies every day, if he sits up half the night playing poker, he may be ever so amiable and ever so prosperous, but he is not the man to make a long-run success of life. Every hour so misspent becomes a part of his stock in trade in character and must reflect itself in his whole activity as time goes on. Wasted hours are not merely erased; they are spent for something which becomes a part of ourselves. A life full of interests which make no contribution to our growth in character is like a merchant's shop

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full of unseasonable and shopworn goods. It will end at last in moral bankruptcy.

The second most frequent cause of business failure is the fact that bankruptcy is contagious and that one failure often causes others. Every business man knows the danger of being closely tied up with irresponsible concerns; yet in every community young business and professional men are to be seen spending their leisure hours with moral ne'er-do-wells, with spenders and grafters whose influence can mean nothing but harm. A business man said to a friend, recently, "I had a long talk with my wife last night and we agreed that we should either have to give up all our present friends or else prepare to go to smash in a few years." Many a couple would be saved years of unhappiness if they would face the situation as courageously as that. Young people, wishing to get into "society" in the community where business demands that they should live, find easiest access to those circles in which questionable practices are permitted. If you will look over the books of your local country club, you will find that the deadheads belong to the sporty crowd, who can give you the address of the bootlegger and who consider any night wasted that is not devoted to pleasure. If you associate with that crowd, you are on the way to unhappy years. It is not that we should have no pleasure in our lives; but just as there are times when a business must be reor-

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ganized and refinanced if it is to avoid bankruptcy, so there are times when we need to reorganize our homes, when we must cease to be attached to useless and unprofitable people and begin the business of living on a new and sounder basis.

We are living in a time, not only of inflated values, but of inflated thinking and inflated conduct. The old things are too slow for the new day. Men are triumphantly ignorant of everything that was thought or written before the middle of the nineteenth century. As one has expressed it, "A man is a new thinker when he is ignorant of what other men have thought." Here is the third cause of bankruptcy, incompetency. There is no more need for one going bankrupt in his domestic affairs than there is of his plunging to ruin financially. It is a matter of competent dealing in both cases. When we come to old age and life is a failure it is because we have bungled it somewhere.

If a man were to set out to drive from New York to San Francisco in an automobile, he would acquaint himself, first of all, with the mechanical principles by which his machine did its work. He would know that violation of the laws which underlie its mechanism makes trouble certain. Yet though there are no spare parts to be had for our souls and minds and bodies, we undertake the journey of life in blithe ignorance and cheerful disregard of the laws which underlie them and

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which can be ignored only at the risk of final ruin. The automobile driver may leave the care of his machine to the man in the garage; but the time will come when the garage man will not be available. Exactly so do many of us leave the care of our living selves to the doctor and the minister; but the time will come when, because he have failed to achieve a competency of our own, the machine will break down. It is true that there are people who seem to have life conducted for them and who manage to live comfortably at small pains to themselves, but sooner or later they will find themselves out on the road with trouble on their hands. If we have not taught ourselves the principles of successful living and if we have not applied those principles in preparation for this hour, the chances are that we shall not get ourselves out of trouble.

Emerson said, "Use all that is called Fortune. Most men gamble with her and gain all, and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But do thou leave as unlawful these winnings and deal with cause and effect, the chancellors of God. In the will work and acquire, and thou hast chained the wheel of chance, and thou shalt always drag her after thee; a political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick, the return of your absent friend, raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. It can never be so. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of

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principles." Success and bankruptcy follow given laws in business and in life. It is for us to know these laws and govern ourselves by them. Former President Jordan of Stanford University once said, speaking of the business of education, "Why do the great majority of merchants fail? Is it not because they do not know how to succeed? Is it not because they do not know that there are laws as inexorable as the laws of gravitation? . . . Half the people in America believe this is a world of chance. Half of them believe they are the victims of bad luck when they receive the rewards of their own stupidity. Half of them believe that they are the favorites of fortune and will be helped out somehow regardless of what they do. . . . There is but one way to earn anything—that is to find out the laws which govern its production and to shape our action in accordance with those laws."

If we would keep out of the moral insolvency and the domestic bankruptcy toward which some of our friends and neighbors are hastening, we must have the courage of our own convictions and the faith of our own judgment. We must refuse to be carried away on the current of extravagance, whether it be the extravagance of money spending or that extravagance of conduct which seems to be a characteristic of our day. Solvency is based upon intelligent conservatism.

When a business man begins to take his business

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for granted he begins to fail. Eternal vigilance is the price of solvency. Jesus told his disciples that it was not sufficient that they should merely seek to enter the kingdom of heaven. "Agonize to enter the kingdom," he said, "for I say unto you that many of them who seek to enter in shall fail." The solvent life is not easy to live. It is a life of constant vigilance, of courageous choosing and of self-denial, but it is the only life that can be happy.

THE VINDICATION OF ILLUSION

I HAVE seen ships bending to the west wind, sailing in a clear blue sky. I have looked from a mountain top and have seen a great ocean liner steaming placidly across the firmament, while clouds floated beneath her keel. I have seen a shimmering lake in the midst of a waterless desert. Nor need one go to mountain or desert to see these things. A few blocks from the place where I write these words, one may look up the busy street on a sunny day and see shining waters, tossing up spray as passers-by walk through them. As street-cars and automobiles pass up the avenue, one sees their reflections in the seeming waters; but there is no water there; the hard pavement is perfectly dry; it is an illusion.

The mirage is the symbol of disappointment among the people of the desert. It invites the traveler with views of trees and water and he toils to come to it, only to realize, perhaps in the last hours of agonizing thirst, that there is nothing there but the hot sands of the desert. But, says the Prophet Isaiah, "The mirage shall become a pool." It is his high doctrine of faith that, not the shrewd calculations of worldliness and practicality, but the misty visions of hope, shall be ful-

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filled. The glowing sands which have lured humanity on through centuries of attempt and failure shall yet furnish to the weary traveler the rest and refreshment he has sought so long.

The practical-minded man prides himself on believing only what he sees. To be thought visionary would seem to him disgrace. The slang phrase, "show me," is an expression of that hard-headed, cautious, worldly skepticism which is so characteristic of the man who disdains the visions of faith.

But, after all, one could easily "show you" the ships floating in the sky and the shimmering lake in the midst of a sun-baked pavement on the avenue. You, who are so practical that you believe exactly what you see, would be sadly in error if, seeing ships in the sky and lakes in the street, you should proclaim that they must be there. The fact is that sight must always be corrected by faith. The things we see are sometimes nonexistent and those to which we are often blind are among life's vital realities. Primitive men, believing what they saw, thought that the moon was a golden ball some twenty-four inches in diameter. They thought the sky a vaulted roof over the earth, pierced with holes to let through the light which guided them on a starry night. One may still find in Japan a pile of rocks which once, according to tradition, formed the stairs by which men could climb from earth to heaven, which was only two miles above

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the ground. All these things are the errors of men who believed what they saw. They saw the earth as flat and they believed it to be so. They saw that, as they looked out upon the ocean, it seemed to come to an end and so they believed that if one should sail his ship far enough it would tumble off into space. Their minds were not disabused until men came who believed what they could not see. Life is spent in separating the seeming from the real. When we have come to the time when we believe ourselves to know something of the realities of life, we are ready to admit that the most obvious thing is often the least true, and the most illusive one the most closely related to reality.

We sometimes measure a man's wisdom by the number of things in which he has ceased to believe. To the pessimist, life is a succession of bitter disappointments. This disillusioned man conceives his fellow men as striving for the unattainable, like children trying to catch sunbeams. To him, life is a bitter hoax; it leads us on, toiling and hoping, with occasional distant visions of still waters and green pastures; and leaves us at last, weary and athirst, amidst desert sands. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." In every life, however successful it may be in the end, there are these times of the deferring of hope, when coming to the place where we felt sure there would be rest and reward, we seem to be as far from it as we

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were at the beginning of our journey. The happiness, as well as the moral value, of our lives will depend on whether we keep on in the struggle to come to our destination, even though we be sick at heart with successive disappointments. He who sits down amidst the burning sands, refusing to go on because of his disappointment, will never come to that place where the visionary is, at last, transmuted into the actual.

It is the promise of faith that the illusion shall be the reality. "The mirage shall become a pool." "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; from the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert." Faith is the trusting of what doubt declares to be a vain illusion. It leads us on in the journey of life through many a weary experience and many a failure to attain, ever toward the lovely view that, in moments of rare vision, we have seen before us. The green pastures and the still waters may not be visible to us now; but we know that we did see them and we believe that, however many may be our disappointments, if we march on bravely, we shall at last come to where they are. The shadow of a high rock in a weary land is somewhere ahead. Sometime we shall rest there and be satisfied. No glittering promises of less lovely things shall tempt us from our path. Our quest

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is for the shining river and we know that we shall come to it.

We may consider how this promise is fulfilled in some of the relations of ordinary life. Here, coming from the door of the church, amid the laughter and congratulations of their friends, are a bride and bridegroom. From their present point of view they see married life as a bright and beautiful oasis amid the drab commonplaces of the world. Hand in hand they have made their way toward it and now they are almost there. Shall they realize the bright vision which now fills them with delight? Is married life to be for them what they think it is to be? Probably not. In six months, or a year, or two, or five, they will discover that many of the visions that seemed so enticing have no reality. They will discover that, even with love to enrich and strengthen them, life is yet a journey through the wilderness. Whether they will continue to go hand in hand with mutual trust and courage until at last they come to the reality which they did not see in the beginning will depend upon their strength of purpose and the genuineness of the love which binds them one to the other. The sparkling waters are before them if only they will continue to believe it. Let them not bind their eyes and refuse to look further. The symbol fades away amid the workaday necessities of married life; but the substance shall yet

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be theirs if, patiently and with courage, they will continue to go forward.

Or here is another procession coming from the church, with no laughter, but with tears. A beloved life has come to its earthly close. A wife and children are left without him who was their protector and their strength; or a father and mother are left to mourn their first born. Where now are all those dreams of the future, on which they founded their expectations of being happy? How our lives clatter in a heap around us when death comes and takes from us the one person whose continued presence with us made living desirable and significant! But at the edge of the grave, faith speaks. "The mirage shall become a pool." That perfect unity of life with life, now deferred in the commonplace of death, shall at last be realized in a realm beyond the range of fleshly vision, yet to the view of faith but a little distance farther on. "Thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am ye may be also; if it were not so I would have told you." So faith strengthens hope and we journey on in spite of present disappointments, knowing that the sufferings of this present illusory hour are not to be compared to the glories which await us in the reality beyond.

That blessed reality is sometimes brought close

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to us by men and women who have found it for themselves. There are those who are so clear-eyed in their vision and so courageous in their faith, that their very presence seems to turn the desert into a refreshing pool. "Blessed," says the Psalmist, "are they who, passing through the valley of hot sand, make it a well." These are the folk who carry with them the atmosphere of the oasis and who come into our lives like a refreshing breeze. It is of such as these that Paul spoke when he said, concerning one of his friends, "He hath oft refreshed me." Many a worn traveler has found a well of water springing up into everlasting life, through the opening of his eyes by one who has passed through sore affliction and has learned to find beauty in the place of ashes and the oil of joy amidst the spirit of mourning.

It is the trust of the religious soul that, in the disappearance of the symbol, the reality for which it stands shall become clear to us. After all, the ships that I saw in the sky were real ships, but they were not in the sky; and the most beautiful illusions of the desert are reflections of actual pools and palm trees, miles away. The hopes of men relate to realities, but we often see them at a faulty angle. Emerson, in his essay on Love, speaks of this. "In looking backward," he says, of lovers grown old, "they may find that several things which were not the charm, have more reality to this groping memory than the charm itself which

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embalmed them." It is not you but the radiance of you that is beloved. "The soul which is in the soul of each, craving for a perfect beatitude, detects incongruities, defects, and disproportion in the behaviour of the other. Hence arises surprise, expostulation and pain. Yet that which drew them to each other was signs of loveliness, signs of virtue; and these virtues are there, however eclipsed. They appear and reappear and continue to attract; but the regard changes, quits the sign, and attaches to the substance. . . . At last they discover that all which at first drew them together,—those once sacred features, that magical display of charms—was deciduous, had a prospective end like the scaffolding by which the house was built; and the purification of the intellect and the heart, from year to year, is the real marriage foreseen and prepared from the first and wholly above their consciousness. . . . The soul may be trusted to the end. That which is so beautiful and attractive as these relations, must be succeeded and supplanted only by what is more beautiful, and so on forever." This is true of all our hopes. We miss the shadow, but if we have faith, we shall at last attach ourselves to the substance. If the path of our life seems to be through hot sands, remember that they who stood by the still waters in the Seer's vision were they who had come out of great tribulation.

Is your life embittered in disappointment?

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Then look back and see if you have not lost brass and gained gold. "For brass I will bring gold, for iron I will bring silver, for wood, brass and for stones, iron." As the symbols of what we think we want fade from our vision, we need only courage and perseverance, toiling a little longer toward the mark of our high calling, to have revealed to us the reality for which they stood. If we are cast down in contemplation of the illusions that are so common in life, let us reflect on how often they have been displaced by yet more beautiful reality. "I saw no temple therein," says the Seer, and one might suppose that for such a man to see through the heavenly portals and find no temple would be a grievous disappointment; but there was something better. "I saw no temple therein for the Lamb and the Lord God Almighty are the temple of it." If there is heaviness and perplexity in our lives, let us be patient. The symbol shall become the reality and the reality shall be infinitely more lovely than the symbol. "For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face." "The mirage shall become a pool."

THE BENEVOLENT CONSPIRACY

IN the eighth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans the Apostle makes a surprising statement. In previous chapters he has been picturing the painful struggle of a soul to find salvation from itself. There is a law of the flesh warring against the law of the spirit. He has no peace because he is in conflict with himself. In the agony of this inner struggle he cries out, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" When he looks out from this inner warfare, it seems that the whole universe undergoes the same incessant conflict—"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain." And then, in the midst of his despair, he finds a "Law of Life." Let a man but turn his life definitely toward the Spirit and all things shall conspire for his welfare. "We know," he says, "that all things work together for good, to them that love God."

In the end of the passage he challenges the forces of evil to do harm to the spiritually minded soul. "In all these things we are more than conquerors. Neither death nor life, angels nor principalities, powers of present or future, powers of height, or depth, nor anything else in all creation

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shall be able to separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Apostle is not indulging in mere rhetorical flights. He makes these statements definitely and confidently, as a chemist might set down a formula. He says these things because he knows that they are true and his knowledge is based on his own experience. In spite of the fact that his life has been full of tribulation and suffering, tortured with what he calls a "thorn in the flesh," persecuted by enemies and not always served by friends, he is a man of joy and contentment. He had proved by experience the truth of the principle he lays down—that to those who love God all things work together for good.

The principle of his teaching rests on his idea that the flesh and all that pertains to it is destructive and that life is to be attained only in the spirit. To be carnally minded, he says, is death. To be spiritually minded is life and peace. And to those who are spiritually minded there is an inner power which is aseptic to all evil. In some of his letters he speaks of the "power that worketh in us." He says that there are various processes but that it is the same God that directs these processes and that the individual need only work *with* the power that seeks to work *in* him to achieve strength and peace. In other words, we are not all saved in the same way but we are all saved by the same God and, fundamentally, we are all saved on the same prin-

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ciple, namely, the joining of our own will with the will of the Divine. When a true concord of purpose is established between ourselves and God, then we are proof against the slings and arrows of the world.

It is the teaching of both Old and New Testaments as well as the faith of Christians of all periods and all churches, that the spirit of God dwells within the life of the individual, strengthening, protecting and comforting. We love such figurative promises as that "the arrow that flieth by day and the pestilence that walketh in the night shall not come nigh thee," that God shall beset his loyal servant behind and before, bearing him up lest he bruise his feet against the stones, leading him through the perilous valley like a shepherd and guiding him through deep waters so that he shall not be overwhelmed. The promise to Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage and no enemy shall stand against thee," is repeated in a hundred different figures in the pages of the Bible. So among these great disciples of Jesus, there was no quavering, fearful spirit. They lived no easy life; they suffered terrible trials; nor were they immune from the commoner forms of tribulation. As the great tragedies of life overtook them, so also did the thousand pin pricks of ordinary existence irritate and worry them. Yet there is about them an atmosphere of tranquillity and peace apparent to the most careless reader of their works.

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They faced all the perils of adventurous life and underwent all the small miseries that flesh is heir to, yet they cultivated in themselves the consciousness of their oneness with God and they lived tranquil and contented as well as tremendously effective lives.

The Christian who is not living a full, grateful, happy, strong life has missed something essential in his faith. Melancholy is no part of religion. If we are not cheerful, we are not truly understanding Him, whose habit it was to greet his friends with the words, "Be of good cheer." If we are gloomy, we are not living the life pictured in the Gospels and enjoyed by millions of those who have found the true Way. Paul recalls to his readers the memory of their unhappy past, "When we were unspiritual," he says, "sinful cravings were active in us which made us fruitful unto death, but now we have abandoned that which once held us and can live in a new way, not under a code as of old, but according to the spirit." The spiritual man, says Paul, lives under a new principle. Whereas the power that once controlled him was the power of death, that which now controls him is the power of life, so that though he may seem, outwardly, to fall into decay, yet he is inwardly renewed day by day.

Whenever we feel ourselves to be afflicted in any way; whenever things go wrong; whenever misfortune meets us, we do well to meditate and

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build up in our consciousness the fact that the indwelling spirit of God is a living power against all evil. I say whenever we are afflicted. I mean literally *whenever*. In the most trifling concerns, when we are disturbed by mere irritations, annoyances and small disappointments, it is well to have this great spiritual truth alive in our thought. No Christian should ever be annoyed. There are times when it is our duty to be angry, but the pettiness of what we call an annoyance should never disturb the tranquillity of any man who has learned how to live. It is by learning to live calmly amid the small troubles of every day that we prepare ourselves for the real trials which are sure to come. It is when we have taught ourselves to live in peace amid the many trifling ills that fill our common days that we shall be made ready to face successfully the great tragedies of life. What we need is that practice of the presence of God recommended by the saintly Brother Lawrence who, amid the irritations of his work as kitchen scullion in a monastery, found the secret of a happy life.

One of the most popular of American diseases is called by the name of "neurasthenia," a name euphonious enough to be given to a flower or a pretty girl. But there is nothing euphonic in the thing itself. It means the jangling of frayed-out nerves, the discord of a life worried into uselessness by trifles before it is half lived, rendered unfit

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to meet the duties and enjoy the pleasures of advancing years. Sometimes a string in a piano will break and in response to all the other notes it will rattle and jangle, to the distress of the least sensitive of ears. So it is with what we call our nerves. The over-tension of some part of our natures causes breakage and frayed ends. Every untoward circumstance impinges and jangles in this discordant area of ourselves with distressing results to ourselves and to our neighbors. Most of this sort of life wreckage could be avoided if only men and women would learn to abide in the realms of peace. When we find things going a bit wrong, we are tempted to think too much of the perils and mischances of life. To the person in this state of mind the world is full of the forces of disaster. We forget that the world is veritably alive with ministrants of healing and cure. "Sin abounds but grace much more abounds." If it were not so the human race would have become extinct long since.

There is here a cure for the haunting anxiety which destroys so many lives. We should keep ourselves reminded of the obvious fact that disaster cannot be the rule and safety the exception, else the world would not have continued to exist. Fears are usually groundless. Optimism is warranted by the fact that, after countless generations of human experience, we are here, still carrying on the enterprises of humanity. Somewhere, amid

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all the troublous elements, there is a power of healing and saving by which we are enabled to make our way through the years. If we could eliminate fear and anxiety from our lives we should save ourselves a great part of the wear and tear that makes us old too soon. We all know that worry is the mood of unfaith. The secret of Paul's continuing joy is to be read in his conduct when the little ship on which he was a passenger was being tossed about in the storm, in instant peril of engulfment. He slept calmly through the night and when morning came he called to his frightened companions, "Cheer up. I know it will be as God told me." There are times in every life when the decks slant alarmingly; but, somehow, the little ship rides on.

But what of those times when great trouble is upon us? Surely then the soul that has learned the essential and inclusive friendliness of life will come into the high rewards of faith. Nothing is more beautiful than the way in which some people bear affliction. It is not a stoical defiance, nor is it a pliant resignation that they manifest. It is a sublime courage, born of faith, that all things work together for good to them that love God. Have you ever noticed how the powers of nature work together in the body when there is a wound? You may have been whittling a stick and carelessly let the knife slip, cutting a deep gash in your hand. Instantly all the forces in your body

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send their potent help to the endangered spot and a wondrous building up begins, the weaving of new tissues, the expulsion of bad matter, the filling in and renewing of the living flesh. It may be accompanied with pain, but you know the process is under way and you are satisfied. What marvels have occurred on the battlefield, when men torn and shattered almost beyond recognition have been restored by the inner forces of their lives, helped by the intelligence of those who know that these forces are there and who are skilled in promoting the conditions in which they work best.

Have you not felt, likewise, that one of God's merciful ministries is in the healing of grief? Sometimes when we have passed through tribulation life seems to wrap us round again with the arms of motherhood. There is healing in the very sunlight, in the glistening white of a snowy field, or the soft breeze of a day in June. Then friendship comes to us with its sympathy and trust and the whole circle of life is so vocal with assurances of tenderness and love that in spite of our grief we smile again. These are the things that the apostle saw in the midst of his afflicted days. He knew hardship, disappointment, injustice, persecution and pain, and yet, as he meditated upon his own experiences, he saw that all things worked together for his good.

Upon this inner divine power we should be depending all the time. An ancient book of travel

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tells of one who prayed during a storm at sea, "O Lord, I am no common beggar, for I do not trouble thee every day, for I have never prayed to thee before, and if it pleases thee to save me I will never pray to thee again as long as I live." This is not at all an unusual attitude, though few of us express ourselves with equal frankness. It is the *practice* of the presence of God we want, not merely an occasional flight for refuge in Him. It is a state of mind that we need, the habitual dependence on the underlying friendliness of life that will give us happiness and peace.

One may ask how all this may bear on the various cults of mental healing, autosuggestion and other like philosophies which have proved so attractive to minds of a certain type. That many people are helped by these systems of suggestion cannot be denied and one is inclined to be thankful that certain kinds of misery can be alleviated on any terms. But most of these doctrines are mere spiritual opiates; they can help us only if we are willing to dull the edge of our minds. Most of us would prefer to keep our sensibilities keen, even though some suffering must be thereby endured, to doping our intellects with any system of thought that involves the perversion of the natural processes of cognition. These men of the New Testament saw the sorrow of the world. They neither denied its existence nor did they shrink from enduring even more than their just share of

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it. We may achieve a meretricious sort of happiness by closing our eyes to the unlovely. We can comfort ourselves by persuading the wounded man by the wayside that he is entirely comfortable. We can refuse to contemplate the misery that is all about us. But this is not the way of the Apostles. It does not answer the problem of life any more than the false sunlight of a scene at the theatre will cause the grass-mats on the floor of the stage to grow.

Plato said that the goal of education, as of religion, was the attainment of a blessed vision, a state of insight into things as they are. We must not deceive ourselves as to a single jot or tittle to gain peace. We must look at life and at all of life. What we need is to see in every tragedy, not only its outer dress of sorrow, but also its inner meaning of blessedness; or, if we cannot see it all, to see enough to make us sure that it is there. All things work together for good to men and women who have attained the insight whereby we may see in life the abiding presence of the divine spirit. The trouble with most of the religions of placidity is that they are loaded with doctrines which involve the perversion of our mental processes and which are not at all necessary to their effectiveness within the range they have set for themselves.

When we abide continually in the eternal presence we learn to recognize the universal powers of God in every common thing. Even as the artist

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studies the landscape until he has attained the insight that enables him to see colors and discern forms invisible to the careless and untrained observer, so the soul that abides in God shall behold the evidences of his presence in the rocks that imperil the channel, in the waves that crash about the little ship and in the clouds that obscure the sun. They will learn that these things are better for the building of our skill and fortitude than the motionless seas and cloudless skies amidst which we should be safe but stagnant. Such men and women shall not ask for an easy life but for insight and courage whereby they may deal manfully with the hardships in which manhood is made. We need a faith that shall comprehend all that we are and all that we do and all that is done to us. We cannot immolate ourselves and live in a vacuum. We must not refuse to look honestly at all the facts of life. But we can know that in ourselves there is a saving power that mingles all the elements of our lives into good, even as there is a power in the plant which takes all the unlikely elements of soil and air, of falling torrent and decaying refuse and fuses them, by the miracle of nature, into the beauty and fragrance of the flower. It is thus that, in the God-conscious life, all things work together for good.

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KING DAVID dreamed of doing a beautiful thing. He planned to build a house unto his God. He never carried out his plan. A day came when it was made known to him, finally and irrevocably, that the dream of his life could never be fulfilled; but with the message came this consoling word, "Thou didst well in that it was in thine heart; notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house."

We were talking of a man who, at eighty-five, fulfilled the purpose he had conceived at forty. It would be folly, however, to assert that all men who conceive purposes succeed in fulfilling them, however hard they try. Many an earnest soul has striven faithfully, only to suffer final defeat. Here, for instance, is David, the hero of Hebrew history. To him are ascribed the highest gifts. He is a warrior, a statesman and a poet. His reign is celebrated as the beginning of all that is glorious in his nation's history. Surely no man's life could more fully exemplify what the world calls success than did the career of David. In his lifetime he had wealth, genius, place and power, and in his death he had immortal fame.

Yet there was one thing lacking; his success was

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not complete, for he failed to carry out the most cherished of his purposes. Through all his manhood he had dreamed of building this temple to Jehovah. One may imagine him in the quiet hours of the twilight, during his warlike career, with the clash of arms stilled for the time and the night coming down on the tents of his weary army, sitting under the royal canopy, weaving the fabric of his dream, the dented arms of a soldier by his side and the vision of a prophet in his heart. "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my strength and my high tower; let the God of my salvation be exalted." These are the thoughts that filled his mind and in them was born his holy ambition to give them expression in enduring stone. As the years passed the building must have taken definite form in his imagination. He consulted architects, searched the Law, drew rough plans on the sand with the point of his weapon and consulted with the more learned of the priests. The most delightful hours of his day, with the work of his sovereign duty done, would be those in which he dreamed and planned this monument of pious gratitude. But it was not to be. He went to his death with the ambition of his life unrealized. Other things he had been permitted to do. This supreme thing was reserved for other hands than his.

It reminds us of the failure of the life of Moses

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to quite complete itself. He had led the people of Israel out of bondage. After years of labor, he had brought them out of their distresses. Then, when the land flowing with milk and honey was almost under foot, he realized that he should never see it save from his post on far distant mountain-tops. So, in his old age, he looked out into the distances where lay the fulfillment of his purpose. Somewhere out there the nation would come to rest; but, for him, life must end here in the misty distance. "This is the land. Thou shalt see it with thine eyes; but thou shalt not go over thither," was the word that came to him. Thus it was with David. Throughout a long life of war and statecraft, which lifted him from the humble home of his father to the throne of the nation, his great dream was of the day when he should build the temple of Jehovah. But it was not to be.

There are some fortunate men who see the full fruition of their hopes. Simeon, serving in the temple until old age, at last sees the fulfillment of his desire and is satisfied. "Now Lord," he says, "lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." But with most of us it is not so. Henry Thomas Buckle, trained to scholarship from babyhood, conceiving in early manhood his plan of making a history of civilization, spending the best part of his life in prepara-

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tion, at last is able to finish no more than the introduction, and cries out on his deathbed, "My book, my book, I shall never finish my book." How many disappointed souls there are whose last chapters must go unwritten!

Wordsworth believed that the happy man was the man who in his maturity was permitted to realize the visions of his youth:

"Who is the happy warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
It is the generous spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought,
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought."

It is a great blessing to be able thus to bring to material existence a cherished dream. Herbert Spencer came very close to doing it in his *Synthetic Philosophy*. In the introduction to his *Principles of Sociology* he says, "In looking back over the six-and-thirty years which have passed since the *Synthetic Philosophy* was commenced, I am surprised at my audacity in undertaking it and still more surprised by its completion. In 1860 my small resource had been nearly all frittered away in writing and publishing books which did not pay their expenses; and I was suffering under a chronic disorder, caused by overtax of brain, which, wholly disabling me for eighteen months, thereafter limited my work to three hours a day, and usually less. . . . Sometimes a forlorn hope is

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justified by the event. Though, along with other deterrents, many relapses, now lasting for weeks, now for months and once for years, often made me despair of reaching the end, yet at length the end is reached. . . . Still there is satisfaction in the consciousness that losses, discouragements, and shattered health have not prevented me from fulfilling the purpose of my life." Yet even Spencer did not quite finish his task, nor did he, with all the labor of those six and thirty years, discover a unified principle of life sufficient to account for its deepest and most constant problems. He died, a depressed and disappointed man, having failed, with all his researches, to find that which could give him comfort as he neared the end. Contemplating his work of a lifetime, he said, as he laid it down, "My chief pleasure is in my emancipation."

Gibbon did it. In spite of an unfortunate love affair in youth and many other disappointments, he did accomplish the one great thing he dreamed of doing. "It was at Rome," he says, "on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the capital while the barefoot monks were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind." Dr. Johnson did it. Undertaking, single-handed, a task that might well have daunted the confident resolution of a dozen

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men, unsupported by the favor of the great and forsaken by some of those from whom he had expected assistance, he labored on until Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language became an imperishable fact in the history of literature. Such happiness as Johnson enjoyed was rooted in this superb accomplishment. So some men succeed, as Caleb did, but many of us do not live to see our lives complete themselves. We may have the desire, the intention and the ability to do a great work and yet fail to bring it to pass. Like Moses, some of us must be content to stop and look at the promised land from afar. When we are in sight of our goal, the barrier is thrown across our path. When our drama is ready to complete itself, the curtain falls, untimely, and we cannot stay to see the end.

It is as if you planted seeds in your garden and they germinated and pushed through the soil, building stem and leaves and buds as the warm days called forth the beauties of all nature to new life. Now suppose the plant to have consciousness and to be aware that the consummation of its existence is a crimson flower. Suppose it tries to bloom, feeling within itself a yearning necessity to express its inner life in color and fragrance; but the bloom never comes; frost falls with the plant still striving and still failing. Many a life's fulfillment is frustrated in just such a way. Shakespere thought through all this three hundred years

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ago when, in his contribution to the play of King Henry VIII, he made the fallen Wolsey say,

“This is the state of man; today he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes; tomorrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do.”

Now this is constantly happening and it is hard for us to understand it; yet we must understand it or life becomes a torturing disappointment for multitudes of earnest souls. And to one who has the depressing conviction that his great life purpose can never be fulfilled, that his root is nipped before his life has borne its fruit, there may well come this message that was given to King David when he was made to see that his dream could never be made real. “*Thou didst well in that it was in thine heart.*” David was busy with war and statecraft, busy with things less romantic and ideal than the building of temples, but more necessary at that particular period in the history of his nation. His military services to his generation had unfitted him for things he wanted most to do. Yet through it all the purpose was there, and it was by that cherished purpose that he was to be judged. Because he had carried it in his heart, he had done well.

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Many of us know what we would do, we know what we *could* do; but we are preoccupied with necessitous duties that bind us as with chains. Every time you say with a sigh, "Ah, how I wish I had my life to live over again," you express the same regret that filled the thoughts of the ancient Hebrew King. The common daily duties have defeated you. "He who hath a wife and children," says Bacon, "hath given hostages to fortune." We cannot write our great poem because the children must be given a home, an education and a start in the world; we know that the coalman and the iceman and the washerwoman will be around promptly with the monthly bill and we must spend the month earning wherewith to pay; and so we come at last to the realization that the time is past and we can never carry out our fine plans for setting the Thames on fire.

Leslie Stephen, the biographer and critic, once wrote to the younger Oliver Wendell Holmes concerning this problem of middle-age. "What ought a man to make of life? Ought I to live on bread and water and write a magnum opus . . . or ought I to have an occasional glass of champagne and write nothing but leading articles? I puzzle over this often and can't make it out. The bread and water plan comes rather hard on one's wife, yet the other is unsatisfactory." I suppose it was not the responsibility for the welfare of a

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wife, nor yet the price of champagne, that kept David from fulfilling his dream; but it was the same sort of frustrating deterrent. Practical duties had preëmpted him. He must go on and do the things that fell to his hand. They were the things that most imperatively needed to be done, at the time, things that he, of all men, could most fittingly and efficiently do. Just so are you and I when we feel in us a power that can never express itself because we must go on day after day and year after year in the routine grind of getting a living. If we keep our vision with us, however unlikely its fulfilment, and if we continue to do what we can do and must do, manfully, faithfully, and well, we may deserve such words of appreciation as are found concerning David in the Book of Acts. "For after he had served his own generation by the will of God, he fell on sleep and was laid unto his fathers." Though we build no temples we shall do well, in that the higher service was cherished in our hearts.

There is a verse in Revelation that has courage in it for those who have done their best and have been disappointed in the outcome. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them." They rest but their works go on. David had done what he could to serve his time and he went to his fath-

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ers. But yet his work was not done; his life had not expended itself when the grave opened. There was still power enough in his purpose to carry on, after he was gone, the project he had dreamed. The temple, after all, was built. His hands did not build it, nor did he live to see it; and yet, without this purpose which had given direction to his life and which, through his life, had prepared his son and the nation for the task, we may well doubt if it ever had been built, at least until some other had cherished the dream of it until he wove it into the hopes of his generation.

No man knows how his life's essential meaning may realize itself long after he has seemed defeated and beaten down. We speak of the wonders of modern invention; but what discovery of modern times compares with the discovery of that unknown student who lived thousands of years ago and who worked out a formula for making a metal of strength and texture suitable for tools, from an amalgam of copper and tin? If the Bronze Age was the beginning of what we call civilization it was because this man of the unrecorded past lived and worked, and if the earth today is girdled by steel rails on which run the swift messengers of commerce, it is only because men have added to the first discovery of this uncelebrated genius. If Langley and Lilienthal had not given their lives to the pursuing of an unrealized purpose to solve the problem of the flying machine

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and if James Means had not dreamed of the mastery of the air while engaged in the prosaic task of manufacturing three-dollar shoes, the Wrights would not have picked up the copy of Mr. Means' little aeronautic magazine from which they received their first inspiration. In countless instances the dream of one life has been realized in the achievements of another, as the dream of David was realized in the day when his son stood in the courts of the gorgeous new-built temple and uttered his immortal words of dedication. In such cases we see how the words of Revelation are fulfilled, "They shall rest from their labors and their works do follow them."

"In that it was in thine heart." That was the thing that interested Jesus when he was dealing with men and women. What was in their hearts? Is this man, Matthew, a publican, a renegade Jew, despised of the respectable? No matter. Let us read the deeper aspiration that is hidden in his heart. Is this woman a prostitute, outcast, abandoned? No matter. Read what is written in her heart. Are you the respectable head of a respectable family with a position in respectable society? No matter, says Jesus, look upon your heart and read what is written there. What is the deep-down purpose in your life? That is the measure of your standing in the sight of God.

And here we come to the very heart of the religious life. You may be inclined to be sceptical

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as we preachers outline to you our pet systems of theology. You are not more skeptical of our systems than we are of one another's. Yet all of us together believe in God, in worship and in prayer. Now here is one central reason why we seek communion with the Divine. Man cannot read our lives; man judges us by what we succeed in doing, not by what we long to do. Man values us by the things we accomplish, not by the things to which we aspire. So we come to this place of worship and offer ourselves in communion with Him who knows us better. We do our work, bear our burdens, and endure our disappointments because we believe that He knows and cares about these secret selves that no man ever sees. Circumstances may imprison us; a multitude of trifles may use our time and strength; we are so compassed about with obligations that the great dreams of our lives remain but dreams; nevertheless we remember the words of Him who called us to Himself. It may have been but a cup of cold water that we were able to offer when we longed to break the precious box of alabaster at His feet; but in appraising our lives he looks not at what we have done, but at what it was our purpose to do. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren," he says, "ye have done it unto me."

So, however far short we find ourselves of fulfilling the dreams of youth, we still cling to them. Perhaps, in the providence of God, we shall yet

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bring them to pass. If we do not, we remember the words of God unto King David, "Thou shalt not build the house, nevertheless thou didst well in that it was in thine heart."

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IT is interesting to note how modern psychology is discovering some of the truths set forth in the New Testament a score of centuries ago. A recent writer gives us a definite technique for happiness and effectiveness. It begins with and depends on what he calls "The Freudian Wish." We are to conceive a wish, a desire, which shall be so inclusive as to bring into subjection to itself all the other desires of our lives. We are to find such a mode of instigating and satisfying desire that when we satisfy one wish, all others will tend to be satisfied at the same time. We may illustrate the matter simply by supposing that a small boy wants candy. He puts on his hat, walks several blocks, offers his money to the shopkeeper, puts it out of his power to buy a baseball—perhaps a dozen distinct acts and renunciations are included in this purchase which is instigated by a desire inclusive enough and powerful enough to dominate his life for the moment. Or we may suppose him, later on in life, to want a college education. If his wish is strong enough to dominate, everything he does will relate itself to it. His work, his play, his money and all else that pertains to him will link itself with his great purpose to obtain an educa-

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tion. On the other hand, if he wants an education and also wants to be the champion of the corner poolroom and the swain of some flyaway girl, he will live a divided, ineffectual, unhappy life. Therefore, says the modern psychology, we must find some wish, or purpose, that shall be strong enough to bend to its own direction all the other desires of our souls, if we are to be happy.

All this Paul sets forth in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. It is not a matter of speculative theology, nor of experimental science; it is the experience of a living soul; it is a piece of sublime self revelation; it is an echo of the human cry for salvation from the inner hell of conflicting desires which makes life a torture. The suffering which Paul had endured is reflected in the passionate eloquence of his words. "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It is the question of the nervous wreck, of the man caught in the trap of ruinous habit, of the soul that is intolerably burdened with the sense of sin. Yet this same man, in later letters, writes in a strain which reflects a self-mastery and inward peace amid outward afflictions which would have overwhelmed an ordinary soul. We may well consider the secret he reveals to us.

To the study of the minister and to the consulting room of the physician come weary souls who seem ready to give up the struggle of life and to

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let the forces of evil have their way with them. Almost invariably, when people come to this desperate pass, the trouble is within themselves. Men face great disasters and seek help in meeting them, they come, bowed down with the weight of sorrow, weary with grief; but none of these are so desperately in need of help as the man or woman whose inner life is a continual warfare of self against self. They are torn in a conflict between two natures and they come with the same cry in their hearts that the Apostle uttered, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Paul answers his own question. "I thank my God," he says, "through the Lord Jesus Christ." He goes on to explain that, in Christ, he has found a higher law, transcending both the law of the flesh and the law of the mind, by which their conflict, one with another, is brought to an end. In this higher law, which he calls the "Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," he has found peace. In other words, he has solved the problems growing out of the contradictions of his inner life in precisely the way in which the scientist solves the seeming contradictions of nature. When one law contradicts another the scientist knows that, somewhere, there must be a higher law through which the two are reconciled. The higher, more inclusive generalization is ever the quest of the man who has great problems to solve. The lawyer seeks it in preparing his argument. The scientist is de-

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pendent upon it and there could be no science without unwavering faith in its existence. We know that truth does not contradict itself and that in every valid bit of truth we possess there must be a determining element that shall link it up with every other truth. So, whether our problem be one of equity, of chemistry, of theology or of the practical management of life, we must govern ourselves in accordance with some great inclusive principle or hypothesis, which shall give direction to all our thought and purpose.

To Paul, Christ is the central element in the scheme of life. He is the personification of the intelligence which underlies all creation. "He is before all things and all things consist in him." When the Apostle turned the powers of his life toward Christ and adopted the Christian point-of-view, those inner antagonisms, which had kept his life torn asunder, ceased, just as the contradictions of astronomy began to be resolved as soon as men agreed that the sun was the center of our planetary system. When we take Christ for the center of our universe and the chief object of our desire, he becomes the perfect fulfillment of the "Freudian Wish," gathering up into harmonious effectiveness all the powers of our lives.

It is at the point of what scientists call integration that the lives of many good people break down. In more common terms they want something to act as a binder, something to resolve them

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into a significant *whole*, something to assemble their separate parts into an effective harmony of design and purpose. The words *integration*, *integral*, *integrity* keep coming into mind as one thinks of this process. Christ is the divine integer in human life, the vital, inclusive element, without which the problem becomes chaotic and cannot be even stated intelligibly. He is the power by which life is bound up into unity. He is the hypothesis by which human life is made as intelligible, as rational and as certain in method as astronomy or engineering. Too many are trying to live according to conflicting appetites and purposes contradictory to one another. Their lives are as ineffective and confusing as a textbook on the stars would be if written by a man who believed in the Copernican and the Ptolemaic theories at the same time. They are as easily broken down as a bridge would be if built by an engineer who sought to justify two utterly contradictory theories of construction in the one structure.

Like Aristotle, Bacon and Spencer, Paul had the encyclopedic mind. He thinks in terms of the universal. Now, as he thinks of his religious experience, he sees life in the same relations as Spencer saw it when he sought for a principle of unity in Nature. Both men saw a more or less heterogenous collection of motives, impulses, appetites and purposes which must somehow be bound together in some kind of unity. So Paul

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says regarding Christ, "All things consist in him." Christ is the universal coherent. He is the head of creation. "All things hang together in him," is the literal meaning of the Greek text. He is the central fact in man's universe. He is the heart and mind of the social organism and he is the unifying principal of the individual life.

We are ineffective and unhappy because our lives are too departmental. We allow the unity of our selves to be violated. We break up into parts. We live a scattered existence, without definite meaning or determinate character. Our lives are like an Oriental bazaar, full of bric-a-brac, over-loaded with expensive junk, having plenty of color but no design, with no more character than a shop filled with odds and ends of furniture. Of course, life is more complex in these days of intricate civilization than it was in simpler times, and yet it must be possible to gather up our complicated existence and rule it in accordance with one comprehensive idea. Christianity, says Paul, is that idea, and Christ is its source and inspiration. Without Him, life tends to become a jumble of conflicting desires; with Him, it is a steady progress toward the achievement of complete, consistent manhood.

We need a religious motive that will not only satisfy our emotional nature, but that will enable us to live rightly, effectively and happily amid the confusing conditions of our everyday existence.

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There is a certain type of religion which denies that such integrity is necessary. Salvation, according to this faith, is a matter of belief alone. The conduct of some persons, who claim to be on terms of particular intimacy with the Divine, makes it clear that, to them, it does not matter how contradictory to the spirit of Christ the acts of the saved individual may be. Of course, no man wants to put a limit on the saving grace of God; yet such a view of salvation does not satisfy us. We know that there is something wrong with a religious faith which makes a man a bad neighbor, or which fills him with spiritual conceit, just as we know there is something wrong with scientific theory which fails to justify itself in practical experience. We want a religious motive that will keep us straight amid the temptations of everyday life, that will keep our hearts sympathetic while we engage in the shrewd necessities of business; that will keep alive in us the vein of poetry, however hard-headed we may be; that will quicken our imagination so that we can, on occasion, throw off the preoccupations of the work-a-day world and see the things of God.

Every man wants many things. That "man wants but little here below" is a bit of poetical nonsense, written by a man in melancholy mood. He wants romance and beauty and money and power and pleasure and physical satisfaction and a score of other things that seem good to him.

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Without these desires he would be less than man; yet in the nagging insistence of them he often loses both his character and his happiness. He falls, as a man would fall who tried to ride four horses at once with no controlling rein by which to keep them running in a single direction.

So obvious is this connection between desire and disaster that religious teachers have commonly taught their disciples to find happiness in the habitual suppression of desire. Today psychology is telling us that this is a misreading of the facts of life and that suppressed desires are the cause of a vast amount of human failure. The New Testament view is that desire is to be, not suppressed, but directed. As man has a "will to believe," so he has a "will to want." In such a solution a multitude that man cannot number have found the way to peace and power. Here we find presented the one great, inclusive, dominating desire of mankind—a Way unto God. When a man goes in that Way he is far from suppressing his desires; indeed, his desires are keener than ever, his life is more abundant, he is set free from the petty inhibitions of the neat-minded moralist. Why, then, does he not go to moral smash? For the same reason that the circus rider, with four horses under him, does not crash into the bandstand. His steeds are under a single control, a rein strong enough to hold them in the Way. Christ is the controlling power of his life. All

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the potent wishes of his soul are comprehended in his relation to Him. In Christ he has become integrally whole.

A man of integrity is a man whose life interests are thus bound together by one great, compelling allegiance. Integrity is another word for consistency. No man is to be trusted, even by himself, who is one kind of a man down town, a second kind of a man up town, a third kind of a man in his home, and yet a fourth kind on the Sabbath day in church, according to which one of his desires has the bit in its teeth. It is interesting to note how often that thought of integrity is expressed in the Bible. The Psalmists challenge the Almighty, "Try me and see if there is any wicked thing in me." "Judge me, O God, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me." When Job makes his sublime defense against the charges and insinuations of his three counselors, he challenges any man to show that his life has not been integrally whole. He longs to stand before God Himself, being confident that the omniscient eye of the Almighty would detect in him no inconsistency. It is a want of this consciousness of moral integration that makes us so weak and vacillating in the conduct of our lives. Our characters are not consistent; they do not hang together. Our business purposes do not track with our moral purposes. Our religious opinions contradict our economic opin-

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ions. We try to hold too many hypotheses at once. Just as men say of a man who has failed in business, that "he had too many irons in the fire," so do men fail in the moral or spiritual life, through inability to cleave to a single moral and spiritual ideal. In Jesus all things are integral. He provides a clear and final standard by which we may test and eliminate, proving all things and holding fast to that which is good.

There are men and women who shape their lives to their love of pleasure. They are consistently frivolous. They are forty-year-old children. They have a sort of happiness because they live according to one desire, the desire for pleasure. There are other men who have a sort of happiness in other pursuits. They live for business, for politics, or for whatever other interest claims their days. A man may get a sort of happiness in turning all his desires to the collecting of first editions or the raising of guinea pigs. Ambition may become the thing by which life consists, and in its fulfillment one finds a kind of satisfaction. There are men who have yet higher unifying purposes. Their lives are bound together by love of family or by benevolence toward their kind. But even the highest of these unifying motives is not strong enough to hold life together to the end. For the man of pleasure there comes a day when, if he does not forsake his sins, his sins forsake him, and pleasure ceases to be enjoyable.

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The man of business, having sacrificed his time, his strength, his opportunities for self-culture, and all else to the desire to get money, comes to the bitter realization that, having gotten money, there is nothing more to be done, and enters into a period of work-wracked age, disappointed and without hope. Even the man who devotes all of himself to his family faces all too soon the inevitable shattering of his idol, for families do not keep together. One by one the children whose companionship and happiness are his only delight, make homes for themselves and at last he and his life partner are left where they were at the beginning, save that they have no longer the hopes of youth.

But Jesus Christ, in the words of the Book of Revelation, is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is the one claimant for our devotion whom the soul does not outgrow. He reconciles all things unto himself, makes all the parts of our lives to be consistent one with the other, binds up our love, our labor and our delights into one whole; in short, he is the spiritual integrant by which our lives become complete entities. He is an inexhaustible source of inspiration; he is a purpose that shall never be fulfilled and yet continues to invite us with the possibility of fulfillment. To become his disciple and do his will is a task never finished and yet never wearisome. He is the all-inclusive ideal, ever alluring and never realized.

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Business, pleasure, family, love, benevolence—no one of these things is big enough to girdle all our life and bind it into one consistent unity. We may imagine Paul himself in the days before his conversion, discontented, unsatisfied, seeking eagerly, yet not hopefully, for some ultimate truth; a man of scholarly attainments, but of restless temperament, his whole life broken up by contradictory allegiances; to Judaism, to Greek philosophy, to Roman statecraft, to ambition and to a yearning instinct for personal communion with the Divine. Then, in the midst of his violent, chaotic and unhappy career, Jesus Christ comes into his life and all these interests are gathered together and given a single direction. As the thought and observation of the astronomer were integrated in the theory of a solar system, so Paul's life integrated itself in Christ. So potent is this process of harmonization, or sanctification, in the producing of blessedness, that, from his imprisonment, bound in chains and facing death, he gives expression to those rhapsodies of spiritual joy and thanksgiving which are so often to be found in his later writings.

What is your life? Is it a dismembered maze of contradictory motives? Are you harassed, uncertain, wavering, double-minded, ineffective, easily discouraged, all too often tempted, constantly diverted from your undertakings? Do you find it impossible to keep your resolutions and to carry out your intentions? Do you believe one thing

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and do another? What you need is a platform, a consciously adopted policy, a hypothesis, a plan of life. You need to be committed to a master who can give a single direction to all the powers and purposes of your soul. You want Christ, in whom all the elements of your life shall be made to hold together. You shall have pleasure, you shall succeed in business, you shall minister to your family, you shall follow learning, you shall fulfill your ambitions, you shall know love, and all these shall be bound together and held to one direction by Him in whom all things are consistent.

This is Paul's setting forth of the underlying principles of happiness and peace which the psychologists now celebrate as the Freudian Wish. Far from making a man an impractical dreamer, taking him out of the world, or making him into a religious crank, to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ stabilizes him, gives him direction, provides him with a saving mixture of idealism and practical ambition and, above all, builds up in him a courage that is born of faith and will not accept defeat. In Christ work and play, duty and desire, good health and appetite, obligation and inclination point in one direction and the soul is free.

THE MAN WHO HATED LIFE

SOMETIMES there falls upon the mind a chilling doubt as to the validity of life. Does it keep its promises? Is there any real connection between being good and being happy? In youth we were taught that virtue brought its own rewards, that the sinner was always miserable and that to be industrious and faithful was, inevitably, to succeed. We were urged to learn our lessons well, on the ground that education was a sure means of satisfaction. When we grew older we learned that parenthood was one of life's chief joys and that there was no pleasure like that of sacrificing self for those who were dependent on us. All these things we believed and on them we planned our lives.

From time immemorial these things have been told to young people because it is the experience of mankind that they are, on the whole, true. We tell them to our children and never confess that we are anything but certain about them. Yet, times do come when we doubt them. Things seem not to have turned out in accordance with our maxims. We have worked hard and yet are not as happy nor as prosperous as we think we deserve to be. The game has gone wrong somewhere.

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The connection between doing right and being happy seems unsure. The rearing of a family has been a joy, but a somewhat tempered one. Our children display little appreciation of the sacrifices we have made for them; they have minds of their own, it seems, and they prefer their own way to our wisdom. When we look back at the years we spent getting an education and then consider the success of men who can hardly read, we have our doubts about knowledge being power. As to the sure rewards of our industry, even if we have succeeded to the full of our ambition, we sometimes look back on our busy years and, considering our present health and state of mind, we doubt very seriously whether we have not been swindled, whether we have not been charged too much for the measure of success that we have gained. "I've worked hard all my life," said a dying man to his friend, "I've been successful; and yet I've never had anything I really wanted." This is not an uncommon state of mind. There is an appalling number of people who, having found many things, have not yet found happiness.

The Book of Ecclesiastes was written by a man who had passed through this mood of disillusionment. He had made great plans for himself and had won great success, yet in spite of all his labor, life had not turned out according to his expectations. Its promises failed of fulfillment. He had succeeded in getting everything which, according

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to the world's teaching, should contribute to happiness. He had a beautiful home, a great fortune, a taste for music and the arts, a delight in lovely things and a keen and cultivated mind; yet he found that, having gotten everything, nothing contented him. So he meditated on the fruitless repetitions of life, wherein men labor endlessly for a satisfaction which never comes. "One generation cometh, and another goeth," he complains. "The sun ariseth and the sun goeth down and hurrieth back to its place where it ariseth again. The wind blows south and the wind blows north. The rivers run into the sea and yet the sea is never full." Life is just a round of monotonous and empty routine. "All things are full of a weariness that man cannot utter; the eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing; that which hath been is that which shall be and there is nothing new under the sun." This was the unhappy conclusion of a successful man, who had commanded the means both of power and of pleasure. He had builded him houses, amused himself with gardens, surrounded himself with luxury and yet "all was vanity and a striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun." Nothing was worth having; nothing was worth doing. "So," he says, "I hated life."

Sometimes, it seems that our work is neither useful nor fruitful. When this mood is on us, all our efforts are to no valuable end. The lawyer

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concludes that in former times the law may have been a great profession, but that now it has come on evil days; the merchant becomes sick of buying and selling and wishes he had been a lawyer; the preacher considers the indifference of men to his message and wonders if he would not have been a happier man if he had chosen a money-making vocation. Israel, mourning before Jehovah, was made to say, "We have wrought no deliverance in the earth." Mrs. Oliphant, doubtless in a mood of disillusioned discouragement, inscribed that text on the title page of one of her novels. Charles Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers of the nineteenth century, wrote to his friend, Bishop Thorold, charging himself with uselessness, at a time when thousands waited on his weekly words. Samuel Johnson, who produced, single-handed, a Dictionary of the English language, and became the man whose opinion on matters of learning and literature was most eagerly sought of all the men of his time, frequently expressed a conviction that he had done little with his life. "I have wasted my life," he said, "in a morning bed."

It is not always our own fault that as we look back upon our lives we see too little of accomplishment. We must be just to ourselves at this point. It is not true that opportunity always comes to those who are prepared for it, for many men and women are conscious that they have prepared laboriously, and that the opportunity has not come.

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We have been ready and have been conscious of our power, but the way was not opened to us and we have gone through life with a sense of lying fallow for want of occasion. There is, after all, something fortuitous in success and failure. Richard Watson Gilder, poet of charming workmanship and many years editor of the *Century Magazine*, told in one of his letters how he enlisted in the army at the time of the Civil War. He was a boy of nineteen or so. It was just before the battle of Gettysburg and he was sent with some artillery to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. As the regiment came to Carlisle it was met by the ladies of the city who had prepared a collation for the soldiers. While the hungry and travel-worn men were eating, the cry was sounded, "The rebels are coming!" A lively fight ensued for the possession of the city. Young Gilder was number one on a cannon. He and his fellows charged it with powder, rammed the ball home and waited at the place appointed. The skirmish came to an end and still they waited. They were never ordered to fire. Those boys pulled that wretched cannon about through the mud of Pennsylvania during the remainder of the campaign and never had an opportunity to fire that charge. The war came to an end and they never heard the sound of their own powder. It is exactly so that sometimes men are prepared and uncalled for. If they have not done

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great things in the vineyard, it is, in truth, because no man hath hired them.

And sometimes opportunity waits so long that we are tempted to disbelieve in those old saws which promise to everyone a reward for his labor. We become like the man in the seventy-third Psalm whose feet had well-nigh slipped when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. "It is all very well to talk about the joys of preaching the gospel," said a disheartened minister, "but I have learned in the bitter school of disappointment that gaudy worthlessness often succeeds while honest efforts are neglected." "A man of merit is never neglected," said Doctor Johnson; but I believe he would, in another mood, have cited many instances to show that sometimes good work does go unappreciated. In the Morgan collection in New York, Thoreau's manuscript of his diary was appraised at \$50,000. It is not altogether reassuring to remember that in his lifetime Thoreau peddled his diary about from publisher to publisher and could not sell it at any price. "I returned," says this writer of Ecclesiastes, "and saw that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong neither yet is bread to the wise nor riches to men of understanding nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." The race, we must admit, is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. "No man," said Napoleon, "will seek epaulettes

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on the field of battle when he can get them in the ante-chamber." And so, as we think of these things, the mood of dissatisfaction possesses us.

Sometimes you may feel that you have been the victim of a tragic hoax. You have done your honest best and life has turned against you with misfortune after misfortune. Why should you fail while others succeed? Why should your child be taken from you while others are left? Why should your health break down while so many men of evil character are spared? Why should you be made to suffer for your sins while other and greater sinners go scot-free? In that remarkable human document, the journal of Marie Baskirtseff, we read that when she was told she had consumption she cried, "Is it I, O God? Is it I, I, I?" The whole world seems wrong when our part in it seems wrong. The writer of Ecclesiastes felt that the universe was badly put together, because, after all his labor, he was not content. "All the labor of man is for his mouth," he said, "yet his appetite is not satisfied."

This condition of discouragement with the constitution of things may lead us in one of two directions; either into a bitter and hopeless cynicism or else into the search for a valid satisfaction. The conditions that depress us are not due to any fault in our economic situation because these times of depression come to men of wealth as well as to men of poverty. They are not due to

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the degree in which we are esteemed for our efforts by our fellowmen, nor in which our contributions to the world's good are recognized, for they attack with equal virulence the obscure and the famed. They are due purely to the limitations of human insight. We become so preoccupied with the things that are around us and near us that we lose our understanding of essential meanings. The very fact that a man should suppose that he could get happiness out of houses and gardens and singers and fountains and works of art is evidence that he has been blind to the eternal facts of life. The man in the seventy-third Psalm found an answer to the problem that was robbing him of peace. He says that all these neglects and injustices were a burden to his mind and heart until he went into the sanctuary of God; then he understood. The writer of Ecclesiastes finds his answer in the same way. "Though a sinner," he says, "should do evil a hundred times and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God." When our lives are dedicated, not to the world with its uncertain justice, but to God, then we are free from life's inequalities. When you work not for men's praise nor men's money, but for the conviction within your soul that you are a laborer in the vineyard of the Almighty, then you will find your happiness in your work itself and not in the reward you receive for your work.

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"I have seen the toil which God hath given to the sons of men," says the writer of Ecclesiastes, "also He hath put eternity into their hearts." Here are two of life's greatest blessings, without which all others shall not avail to make us happy. Whatever else we possess, we must have useful work to do, and the hope of the eternal to sustain us. We must have a real touch with the practical world and an inner compulsion toward the world of the spirit, if we are to live a complete life.

And these two are really one, if we see them truly. The test of a man's work is the eternal quality he puts into it, and the test of his faith is the labor in which he dedicated it. As "faith is dead without works," so work is a lifeless thing when it is unmixed with faith. The man who does not see the end of his task from the beginning, its relation to the task of which it is a part, its relation to the whole task of mankind and its kinship to the creative providence of God, loses the joy of labor and easily becomes a drudge, a slave, driven to his daily work by the whip of necessity. And the pious idler, who spends his days apart from the ordinary concerns of men, will never know the joy of his Lord, who was a man of work. A useful task in hand and an eternal hope in heart—these are twin blessings of a contented life.

"I shall be satisfied," is the most complete confession of faith in God. To come to the middle years of life, realizing the emptiness of much we

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once thought full to the brim of satisfying reality, yet holding fast our courage and our faith in the ultimate justice of God's will, is to find the way to an old age that shall be filled with serene contentment. If eternity is in a man's heart he need not be so desperately solicitous concerning what is in his house or on his breakfast table. If he seeks eternal things he will not exhaust the powers of his manhood amassing temporal things which, at last, will seem vanity of vanities to him. To seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and let all else come or stay as it will, is to seek that in which the soul shall find enduring satisfaction.

This is the conclusion to which the writer of Ecclesiastes came after having tried to find satisfaction in worldly success and after seeking contentment in the possession of things. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," he says. "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man."

What hath a man for all his labor? Is the game worth while? If the game of life is played for the sake of the bauble we may get as a prize for crowding our fellows out of our way, it is not worth while; but if it is a thing done for its own sake and because it fits us for that yet more abundant life toward which each day is a day's journey, then, with all its tribulations, it is full of joy.

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A GOOD Scottish friend of mine, a lady of some two hundred pounds avoirdupois, had suffered a slight misfortune. Her minister, then a student in theology, called to express his sympathy. "Ah, weel," she said, with a sigh, "it's naething new to me. I've ever been like a sparrow alone on the housetop." She did not look the part; but her feeling was sincere and her knowledge of scripture accurate. The man who wrote the one hundred and second Psalm held a view of his own life like that of many of our friends, to whom religion is a sighing affair. "I am like a pelican in the wilderness," he said; "I am like a sparrow alone upon the housetop." To people with this habit of mind, disappointment is an expected guest. The greatest of all disappointments, to them, are those occasions on which they are not disappointed, when the picnic day shines clear and when trusted men prove true.

There are two ways of meeting life's difficulties. You may take the pelican view and count yourself a saint in suffering; or you may look on your sea of troubles as did the Apostle Paul, whose life was full of dark days, of threatening and storms, who had endured beatings, imprisonments, ship-

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wreck, hunger, sickness and betrayal. "In Asia," he says, "I was crushed. I wrote to you in sore distress, in misery of heart and with many a tear." He speaks of his outward man perishing day by day and of a "thorn in the flesh" that must have been a torture to him. He was having just the kind of trouble that the psalmist was having, but he never once thought of himself as a pelican in the wilderness or a sparrow alone on a housetop. "I am confident," he says. "I am not ashamed." "I believe." "I can do all things." "I am not afraid to boast." "I have fought a good fight." "I am not the least of the Apostles." "I am an ambassador of Christ." He thinks of himself as an athlete, pressing toward the prize, as a soldier, armed for conquest and competent to achieve it. In all the writings of this man whose life was so full of privation, pain and sacrifice, there is not a line to indicate that he ever took the pelican view of human existence.

"Without were fightings, within were fears, nevertheless God . . ." Here is the secret of this great man's greatness. "It is God," he says, "that establishes me, confirms me, stamps me with his seal. Wherever I go God makes my life a constant pageant of triumph for Christ." "Though I am unknown, yet I am celebrated. Though I seem to be dying, yet here I am after many a battle, alive and thankful. Though I am a pauper, yet all things are mine. Without a penny I am

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yet enriched with the unsearchable riches of God."

Now in your life and mine there come days when there are fightings around us and fears within. No life that is productive is free from conflict. It is literally and always true, as the eleventh psalm implies, that the wicked bend their bows, in secret, to shoot at the upright in heart. The world is filled with perils which every one of us must face if we are to go forward to the conquests of life. But it is the blessed power of Christian faith that it enables us to behold the fightings that are around us and be unafraid. It is the consequence of a true religious view of life that we may look facts in the face and keep tranquil. There is a kind of shallow optimism that persuades itself that every cloud has a silver lining and that somehow and sometime everything will come all right. But this is not the spirit of the Apostle. Unstatistical optimism is a nuisance. The man who will not see the perils that beset his path is far from wise. Paul saw clearly the facts of life. He did not deceive himself about them. He did not shut his eyes to misery or pain or sin. He could look these things in the face steadily, because he believed that while they existed there also existed the redemptive power of God in the world.

The religious life is not a comfortable life; it is a comforted life. To the spiritually competent person the evil powers of the world hold no terror

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because he is vividly conscious of the resistant force within himself. To him there is always an impenetrable refuge from the most outrageous fortune or the most persistent persecution. It is for this reason that the reading of the Bible is of great value to any soul seeking happiness in untoward circumstances. Its writers were men who saw the fact of the divine as the controlling fact of human existence. In spite of all that an hostile world could do to them, God remained as their shield and stay. Even this psalmist, who began his poem by picturing himself as a pelican in the wilderness, ends it with the assurance that, though the heavens perish, yet God shall endure and He will cause the concerns of His servants to be established.

There is enough trouble in every life, however fortunately situated, to furnish material for continual complaint, if we choose to take the complaining view of existence. And there is enough evidence of the goodness of life in the experience of the least fortunate of us to turn our mourning into song, if only we will teach ourselves to see. Somewhere in the circumstances of each afflicted soul there is a "nevertheless" in which the springs of consolation are to be found.

In the life of Paul there were at least three of these sources of comfort and encouragement. First there was his work. From his prison he writes in joyful strain because his own suffering has seemed to work out to the furtherance of the

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task to which he had given his life. Let anyone, who has a bit of work to do, thank God. If he looks on it as the mere means of getting money wherewith to buy what he needs or wants, he is a miserable drudge; but if he has that faith whereby he can link up his humble task with the labor of humanity, then he is a partner with all history and a co-worker with the divine.

The second ingredient of the apostle's cure for the pelican view of life is friendship. "God," he says, "who comforteth the dejected, comforted me by the coming of Titus, and not by his coming only but by the assurance he brought of your affection and friendship." We do not want to find too much fault with the psalmist, but it is significant that he conceived himself to be alone like the sparrow on the housetop. There is no need for any man to be alone. The world is full of friendship and in the dreariest hours friendship glows with the purest light. We remember how Jesus craved the presence of his friends in the critical hours of his mission, how he loved to make his way to Bethany, where friends had their home, and how, in the garden of Gethsemane, when his heart was breaking, it comforted him to know that Peter and James and John were not far off. There is no comfort, no hope, no strength, no religion in loneliness. As the sun floods the day with light and warmth, so God has filled the world with sympathy and love. It is a part of our duty to love

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men and to deserve their love as it is to enter into communion with Him. It may be well enough to get money, skill, fame or power, but no man has succeeded who has not accumulated friendships. Our friends may not be saints, but their friendship is one of the choice gifts of God, and even when they are absent from us, as Paul was comforted by the knowledge that his Corinthian friends were thinking of him, so we are made stronger by the consciousness that we are not forgotten.

There are dark hours in every life. There are times when it seems as if we shall not be able to bear the things we are called on to endure. There are times when our task drags on us like a load on a beast of burden; there are times when our own hearts fail us and we condemn ourselves. "Nevertheless God," says Paul. When our other sources of strength have failed us the eternal and unfailing source remains. Without us is strife and quarreling, the clamor of contending parties, the threats of the violent and the rebellions of the discontented; within us there are shuddering qualms of fear when we measure our own puny power against that with which we must contend; nevertheless God is with us, and if He be for us, who can be against us? In the eleventh Psalm the poet, who is in anything but the pelican mood, has been thinking of these things, and he cries out in indignant protest, "Why do you say to my soul, 'Flee

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as a bird to your mountain?' Why do you seek to frighten me with whisperings of warning that the wicked are bending the bow and making the arrow ready upon the string? Why do you darkly suggest that the foundations of justice are destroyed and that there is no hope for good men in the earth? Behold, I answer, 'God is on his throne. All that passes in this world He sees. He tries the righteous and the wicked, and he will see that justice shall prevail. Therefore in God do I take refuge and I shall not fear what the evil of the world may do to me.' " Here, some hundreds of years before Paul's time, was a man who passed through the same experience and found final comfort in the one unchanging fact of God, and here, some centuries after his time, we face the same tribulations and find the same comfort in the same eternal fact.

No life that is worth living can escape the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. Unrequited toil, misdirections of trust, disappointed hopes, defeated purposes—all these are as sure to come into the life as wintry days are sure to succeed the warmth of summer. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Nevertheless God comforteth us. He opens to us the Book of Life, wherein are written the stories of men who went through deep waters and were not overwhelmed. He awakens in us the qualities of self-giving whereby we bind to ourselves friends as with

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hooks of steel. And He besets us before and behind with his own presence. So we have peace. "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts."

THE BLESSINGS OF BONDAGE

“REMEMBER my bonds.” These are words from a letter written by a man in prison to his friends. He had been opening their vision to new and gorgeous life. He had urged them to look beyond the things of this world, to lift their thoughts to eternal truth and to fix their affections on things above. He had shown them the way to peace, a peace that is deep and divine, and he had exhorted them to “put on the new man and put off the old,” which process would result, he promised, in new and blessed relations between husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants. He is opening doors for these people, showing them the way to a freer life, and he ends by asking them to remember that he who writes is a prisoner, bound in chains. “Remember my bonds.” It is a pathetic little parenthesis, slipped in amidst the Apostle’s visions of eternal liberty.

It would be hard to overestimate the repugnance of such a man to bondage. He was a man of surpassing energy, glorying in his freedom. There was work to do, of world significance, and he knew that none but himself had been appointed to do it. The world was dying for the very thing which he, of all men, could best give it. He was the Apostle

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of the living God. And he was in jail! One might suppose he would pace the floor, calling out for God to slay him or to release him, raging against the cruel circumstances that kept him cribbed up in captivity; but there is nothing of the kind discernible in his writings from that prison place. He speaks of the care of all the churches being upon him, of his dealings with friends who come and go, of his letters to other groups of Christians and of his confidence that, though he is a prisoner, yet his work is not at a standstill. But is he satisfied to sit immured there in a Roman prison? Not for a moment. He dreams of freedom. He writes his friends to prepare him lodgings against the day of his release. Alas, it is almost certain that he never saw those rooms, so lovingly prepared for a man who had suffered. He talks of a voyage to Spain. One may picture him, sitting dreamy and silent, meditating on the sunny slopes he hoped to see. Castles in Spain they verily were, for Paul never saw them; yet, like a vastly different man of later time, James Boswell, he might well boast that he lived in them.

We have all felt, at times, like prisoners. There are few who do not think themselves capable of living a life of wider range than has ever been permitted them. Though, to some extent, we are the architects of our own fortunes, we know very well that the architect is always limited in his work by the ground on which he must build, by the ma-

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terials that are given him and by the particular purpose for which his building is intended. He cannot fulfill his dream of a gothic masterpiece in a canning factory, nor can he put a row of doric columns around a bungalow. He may dream of a lofty tower all his life and yet be compelled by the necessities of making a living to spend all his days erecting unpoetic shops and uninspired apartment houses. It is much the same with all of us. However wide may be the range of our lives, there is still some path forbidden which we long to tread. And, with the vast majority of us, that which we are allowed to do and see is but the smallest fraction of that to which our souls aspire. We are prisoners within the little circle of our circumstances and our happiness will depend on whether or not we learn to be contented there and to range in the spirit through those distant places which shall ever be unseen of our mortal eyes.

The salvation of the world, said Carlyle, is assured by the certainty of heroes being born into it. These are the men who, in spite of deterring circumstances, do the work that is laid on them to do. "We went into Spurgeon's Tabernacle this morning," writes a diarist in 1872; "I had never looked on such a sea of faces before. . . . Mr. Spurgeon was so lame from rheumatism that he used two canes and placed one knee on a chair beside him when preaching. His text was, 'And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth.' " Is

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your imagination too dull to enable you to read the tragedy of pain behind this little picture? The great preacher, after a sleepless night in which the very sheets were a torture to his wracked limbs, dragging himself forward to the pulpit on canes, yet swaying by his visions of all things new an audience of thousands; surely here are bonds no less real than the steel manacle with which Paul was chained to a Roman soldier, and here is a soul no more bound by them.

There is consolation in the thought that the great are not immune from the weaknesses and limitations of ordinary men. We consider the bonds of the apostle and we are comforted. We ought to be more than comforted; we ought to be inspired, perhaps rebuked. At least such reflection should cure us of that self-pity which is alike the paralysis of usefulness and the death of happiness. Our sense of compassion was never given us to spend on ourselves. When we begin to be sorry for ourselves we take the first step in cowardice. We do have our troubles. There are bonds on our wrists. But it does not follow that, because there is somewhere a miscarriage in justice, the universe is badly put together. The finest thing an unfortunate man can do is to put his own misfortune aside when he appraises life. You may be deaf, but it does not follow that there is no music in the world.

We are too prone to excuse ourselves for un-

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productive and self-indulgent lives on the score of limitations which we cannot cure. It is good for us to remember that the greatest work ever done by men was done by men of like limitations with ourselves. The Apostle suffered all his life long with ill health, so that he was obliged to be in the constant care of a physician. Luke, who wrote the third gospel, was the man who gave what he had to make the career of Paul possible and what he had was a physician's skill. Let us stop at this point a moment. We think of this letter as an epistle of Paul the Apostle. But other men contributed to it and we must not forget them. First there was this same Luke, without whose care it is not likely that the apostle would have been able to do his work. Second there was the unknown man who actually did the writing. Paul seems to have been unable to write more than a few words at a time, owing to some trouble with his eyes. Five times in different letters he mentions the fact that he is writing the salutation, or signature, with his own hand and in the closing lines of the letter to the Romans, we read a little greeting, slipped in by the man who was at that time acting as his amanuensis, "I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you." If Tertius was eyes and hands to Paul, Tychicus was feet, for it was he who set out over the unfriendly road, to deliver to the Colossians the message the Apostle could not bring himself.

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Now it is just so that each one of us is in bonds, but the bonds of each are different. And each of us is free, but the freedom of each is different. And so we join ourselves together, each one giving what he has that the whole may be made complete. When your architect friend finds his opportunity to realize the tower he has dreamed, the hands and bodies and brains of a thousand men must be added to his own before the work can be done. This is what the Apostle means when he talks of diversities of gifts and likens the church to a body with hands, feet, mouth, eyes, and ears. To one it is given to do one part of the work, to another some other part, according to the limitations and abilities of each. So the whole body, he says, "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."

There is help in the realization that none of us is called to accomplish everything, and that none of us is excluded by our limitations from contributing something to the sum of human good. We shall all be happier when we have come to the conclusion that this small thing or that is our own work and that we intend to be useful and happy with fulfilling it. I have always liked Emerson's lines wherein he makes the mountain and the squirrel argue about their respective places in the cos-

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mic scheme. The mountain speaks slightly of the squirrel and the squirrel answers:

“I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place,
If I am not so large as you,
You are not so small as I;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut.”

It is a courageous and correct view of life and we know very well that any squirrel who takes such a view of himself will find the business of being a squirrel mightily interesting.

We are reminded, furthermore, that our bonds are not as inflexible as steel. Burge Harrison tells us that one of the most successful marine painters of recent years was so color blind that he could tell red from green only by their places on his palette. We may be bound but we are not in a straightjacket. We can move. Paul's failure in eyesight did not affect his spiritual insight. Tertius could not compose a masterpiece, but he could transcribe one to parchment and make it available for the centuries to read; Tychicus may have been no preacher, but he could carry a preacher's message; and Luke, wanting the superabundant spiritual power of his friend, could yet devote his life to caring for the body in which that power had its mortal existence. Thus all this little group of friends were doing the same thing, that is, doing their best with what they had, working honestly

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and courageously in spite of the bonds which prevented them from doing all they yearned to do.

We are likely to be poor judges of the outreach of our lives. One remembers a little school-teacher who came into the town of Litchfield, something like a century ago. One can imagine her longing for a place in life from which she was excluded by circumstances and ill-health. One can easily think of her wondering if the struggle were worth while. Half a century afterward whatever doubts she may have had were answered, and we hope that, somehow, she heard. There was a great audience in a great church and the greatest preacher in America was speaking. This is what Henry Ward Beecher said in 1874: "There came to Litchfield, when I was about eight years old, a tall, slender creature. Her name I have forgotten, if I ever knew it. So delicate and attenuated was she that the sun seemed to shine through her. Whereas, before, in that hateful old schoolhouse, I had been cabined and cribbed and curbed and pinched and whipped for not learning what was not taught me, there came this spectre of a human being, whose eyes were lustrous of another world and whose heart was full of gentleness and richness. Nor can I remember that she ever opened a book to me. I can only remember her as a dream, but I feel to this hour, and distinctly, that many of the things I say to you were born of the influence of that woman, who, if I mistake not,

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taught in that school but a single summer. I have long been preaching and it may be that many preachers who have gone forth from this church have derived influences from me, and they in their teaching are unconsciously indebted to her. She lives in a strength that never dies, born again in each generation of men who carry forward the influence that she brought to bear on my heart."

Another half century has passed and to-day there are men influencing the lives of thousands who are indebted to Henry Ward Beecher as to no other man. Few men have influenced the American pulpit as did he. How strange it is that a century after that sick little woman came diffidently to Litchfield to take up a burden too great for her frail body, we should be brought to recognize her influence as it has come down the decades and now contributes to the quality of those hours in which we worship God. If, from many a place of worship, men and women come on Sunday morning strengthened and encouraged, it is because, in some real measure, she did her best, a hundred years ago, in spite of her bondage of physical infirmity.

Sometimes we define and delimit ourselves in an arbitrary way, seeking to make our bonds an excuse for failing to render what we ought. "You know," a man will say, "I am a business man. Of course I can be of no use in religious matters." "Of course you know," says another, "that I am

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a poor man. I cannot give, much as I should like to do so. Now if only I had a few millions, I should do wonders with them." Some men seem to think that it would be as vain to ask a business man to take a definite part in the spiritual salvation of the world as it would be to expect Emerson's squirrel to leave off cracking his nuts and begin to sing.

When we feel the limitations of our position in life it is time for us to strive for some outreach. When Paul found himself cribbed into a Roman prison, it was more important than ever that he should reach out to his friends in Galatia, in Colosse and in Philippi, and dream of Spain. To sit in despair, concluding that because he was in jail no one could rightly expect anything of him would have been fatal to his whole after life and to his fame as an apostle. It is at the very time when we feel our bonds that we can best break them. In numberless cases has it been proven so. We know of business men who have been like pillars of righteousness in their communities though they never preached a sermon and would have been rendered speechless with fright if they had been asked to stand up in public and pray. We know of poor men and women who have enriched the world with their lives. Silver and gold they had not, but they had what silver and gold could not command and they gave it freely.

We ask the world to remember our bonds, as

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Paul did. We ask men and women to be generous with us, to give us some latitude in view of our imperfections and our want of abilities. We do not judge others according to counsels of perfection and we pray that we too may be appraised in accordance with charitable human standards. Surely it was thus that Jesus judged men and women. He always saw their bonds. However crippled with the paralysis of sin the man might be, still the Savior encouraged him to the undertaking of spiritual conquest. When the woman dropped two mites into the Lord's treasury Jesus remembered her bonds, the bitter bondage of extreme poverty, and he praised her for the great thing that she had done. When another came and anointed his feet, just before his crucifixion, he remembered her bonds. She had sinned much and suffered much; she had been forgiven much and she loved much. "Let her alone," he said, "she hath done what she could." Long before he came to his imprisonment at Rome the Apostle had learned these things. "If there be first a willing mind," he said, "it is accepted according to what a man hath and not according to what he hath not."

Bondage brings its blessings, no less than freedom. The outer constraint begets in us the effort to achieve inner liberty. The preacher's pain-wracked body makes him the more mindful of that sphere of the soul in which all things are be-

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come new. The manacle on the Apostle's wrist becomes the occasion for those poems of the spirit's freedom which have lifted multitudes out of the deeper bondage of the flesh. So it is that the bonds of our lives are broken. We do the best we may with what we have, knowing well that He who gives the increase will not suffer our toil to come to naught. "Therefore be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

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THE twenty-eighth chapter of Job is a poetic description of a mine. The poet is meditating on man's absorbed devotion to the search for gold and silver and precious stones.

"Man overturneth the mountains by the roots;
He cutteth out channels among the rocks,
And his eye seeth every precious thing.
He bindeth the streams that they trickle not;
And the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.
But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?"

Where is the place of understanding? With all our searching and our getting, we can never be at rest until we have found an answer to that question. The writer of this poem might have written the seventy-third psalm. In both poems a man, confused and rebellious as he contemplates the injustices of life, is searching for mental and spiritual peace. Something is wrong with the way in which rewards and punishments, successes and failures are distributed. The good too often live in poverty and neglect while evil men strut about, girdled with pride, full of loud boasting, their eyes puffed out with self-indulgence, having more than heart could wish. Both these poets were

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tempted to renounce their faith in God and in the moral law. Job's wife, cheerful helpmeet that she must have been, advised him to curse God and die. The psalmist confesses that he was on the brink of moral self-destruction. "My steps had well-nigh slipped, my feet were almost gone, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. My soul was in a ferment, my heart was stabbed, I was as a beast."

The problem to which these men sought an answer was the one which, in our own day, has turned men to Bolshevism, anarchy and other organized protests against the maladjustments of this world's affairs. To some men anything seems better than a world in which war and poverty and oppression are constant factors. They suppose that they are rebelling against some particular system, economic or political; the truth is that they are rebelling against the age-old fact of human sin. We may hope that, as man learns the technique of government and civilization, he will do away with many of these evils; but it will be a long process. In the meantime, there is one refuge for us who live in the world and must make the best of it. It is to be found where Job and the Psalmist found peace. It is the place of understanding. "I went into the house of God," says the poet; then I understood." In the presence of the Eternal, things fell into perspective again. "The fear of the Lord," concluded Job, "that is wisdom."

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The solution that came to these men must be found by everyone who would be happy in this blundering world. To understand is the highest gift God gives to any man. To be blessed with insight, so that we can see beyond the confusions and inequities of life, into the meaning of things, to be able to discriminate between the essential and the superficial, is to enter on the way of peace and satisfaction. The Bible constantly celebrates the joy of those who have attained to understanding. The price of wisdom is above rubies and to miss it means the one mistake in life that means misery. Men will not shrink from suffering if only they can understand that their suffering is not the visitation of blind chance or a cruelly whimsical providence; they will gladly make sacrifices and toil all their lives without material reward, if only they can believe that some benefit is to accrue; but to endure and suffer and see nothing in it all but agony, to toil and see no outcome, to live a virtuous life which seems to lead nowhere, while evil men enjoy all the things the world associates with success, makes good men despair and turns the labor that should bless them into emptiness and vexation of heart.

It is when we see God that we understand. I do not mean that religious faith will impart facts to the mind in some miraculous way. Religious people do not know politics, economics or finance any better than other people. One does not learn

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to speak a language or calculate the movements of the planets by the practice of the devotional life; nor will the most exemplary piety prove a substitute for shrewd competency if one sets up to be a merchant. Yet when a man once sees God he sees much else. A man of faith may not know any more about those scientifically observed changes which accompany death than any scorner of religious belief; but he does know some things concerning death that are of more value to him than any amount of empirical knowledge. A devout man may not know any more about the nature and effects of sin than many a moralist who has no God, yet when he enters the sanctuary he gains insight into that which a lifetime of the study of ethical philosophy will not reveal. The religious soul may not know as much about the psychological effects of prayer as the young savant whose doctor's degree is not an hour old, but of its power and its practical utility he knows what no man may learn save in the attitude of devotion.

There is a kind of understanding that is of faith and the experience of faith. We are told by the Apostle that the things of the spirit are spiritually discerned. This is no more than to say that the things of science are scientifically discerned or the things of art are artistically discerned. No man expects a cobbler to be competent in questions of sculpture. Before the cobbler may tell a good statue from a bad, he must pass through a certain

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artistic discipline. There is a spiritual discipline through which we must pass before we can come to spiritual understanding. Some of the most acute difficulties in life lie in that realm which is to be penetrated only by the spiritual vision. The psalmist is tortured by a problem partly economic; but no economist can help him. What he wants is insight into things beyond the range of economic truth and he finds it in the sanctuary of the living God. Where science stops, where worldly wisdom reaches its limits, where the eye cannot see nor the ear hear, where those things lie of which men cannot tell each other but for which all men yearn, there faith begins. It is there that the deeper understanding is to be attained and where the answers to some of the haunting riddles of existence are to be found.

If we are to be happy we must gain that insight into ultimate values by which, amid the confusing injustices of life, we shall retain our faith in the validity of experience. There is much to make us doubt whether man, with all his learning, has really come to the finality of truth regarding anything. Some of the most cultivated men have found themselves, at the end of life, doubting whether any conclusion to which humanity has come can be trusted. Somewhere we must find something on the truth of which we can depend if we are to know happiness. Like the Psalmist, we are plagued every day with the wrongness of

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things, the seemingly wanton perversity with which actual events contradict the percepts by which we have been taught to order our lives. Virtue is so often left to be its own and its only reward that even the distinction between right and wrong is doubted. When we see the waters of a full cup poured out to the selfish profit-taker while men who have tried to live usefully and unselfishly are compelled to live in neglect and poverty, we are tempted to cast away all scruple and plunge headlong into the game of getting; or we may take refuge in a resolute stoicism, boasting that our heads, though bloody, are unbowed; or, again, we may school ourselves to bitter laughter and an attitude of cynical scorn. But we shall not find happiness until we are able to look through the perverse waters of daily experience into the calm depths where these superficial currents and cross-currents are unfelt.

It was too much preoccupation with the surface of life that came so near to bringing about the moral and spiritual ruin of the Psalmist. Jeremiah, the Prophet, passed through the bitterness of the same experience. "Wherefore doth the wicked prosper?" he cried. "Why are they all happy who deal treacherously?" He wanted to be assured that the call to righteousness was not a cruel hoax and that goodness was really worth while. There are times when even the Prophet of God wavers as he thinks of those in-

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justices which would be farcical did they not so often involve lifelong disappointment and sorrow. Any man who stands at the corner of a fashionable street or at the entrance to a gaudy house of pleasure and watches the careless, self-indulgent crowds who come and go and then thinks of the thousands of devoted men and women who are wearing down health and strength in unselfish service for a miserable pittance, may well be tempted to cry out in rebellion. Why does God not take the side of the good with more definiteness? Another witness in the Psalms says that in a long lifetime he has never seen the righteous forsaken nor his children begging bread. We wonder if he could give such testimony if he had written in these times. Do the miserable slums of the city, where women nurse their babies amid hunger and filth, contain no good men and women? We know better. One has only to look about him in his own community to mark good men, industrious, useful and godly, whose whole lives are successive chapters of misfortune, and bad men, who have gouged their fellowmen with ruthless consistency, piling up wealth on a foundation of shrewd brutality, who all through life enjoy their ill-gotten prosperity and in death have long obituaries and eulogistic tombstones made for them.

This is one of the facts of human existence which we must learn to face and still live happily. How shall we do it? Simply by taking the sanc-

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tuary view of the matter. The reason men lose their peace of mind when they consider these matters is that they have permitted the world to lead them into the folly of materialism. They are setting too high a value on mere things. They identify riches with happiness when, as a matter of fact, there is as large a percentage of miserable people in big houses as in little ones. When we slip into the error of supposing that *happiness* and *having* are interchangeable terms, we easily fall into the further error of supposing that God cares nothing for us because He does not give us money as the reward of our work. When we go into the sanctuary we gain a deeper and truer view. It was here, where Isaiah, downhearted and doubting, saw the Lord, high and lifted up, that this maker of psalms was made to realize that happiness is not a thing to be reckoned in coins, bonds and acres, or even in the approval of his fellowmen. He saw that the material profits at which the selfish clutch are but the toys of an hour while the prize of the high calling of God is an eternal possession. He realized that there can be no attainment so precious as the sense of communion with the divine and that happiness is a spiritual thing. In the glow of his great discovery he cried out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is nothing on earth that I desire except thee. Others may do what they will and get what they can, but it is good for me to draw nigh unto God."

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The vision in the sanctuary is the way to understanding. We must walk, not by sight but by insight. That is why the place of worship is never quite forsaken, despite all the places of pleasure and of profit that invite mankind. Preachers may be dull, choirs out of tune and sextons forgetful about heat and ventilation; but men and women continue to come, even though they grumble. The church has many faults, but with them all it has one great gift, by which, somehow, it gives world-weary people a glimpse into those blessed mysteries which have ever been the restorative of souls.

If your soul is all a-jangle with the discords of the world, step out of it all for an hour of self-forgetting devotion in the nearest place of worship. There, within the walls of the sanctuary men and women like yourself have found peace and have gone away with truer views and nobler purposes. But let no seeker for such blessed hours go shopping about the town to find the most ornate eloquence or the most expensive music. Let him not be lured by novelties and the promise of thrills. It is not an hour's entertainment he is seeking. Let him seek a place in which he is sensible that he is in the sanctuary of the Most High, where his perturbed spirit shall find rest and from whence he shall come forth feeling that he has been with God.

“Whence cometh wisdom and where is the place

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of understanding?" asks the poet in the Book of Job. "God understandeth the way thereof and He knoweth the place thereof. And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." "My feet were almost gone," says the psalmist, "my steps had well nigh slipped. I was plagued all the day long and my thoughts were a misery to me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood; then I awakened as one awakens from a horrid dream. I have learned that it is good for me to draw near to God. He is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

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"HAPPY are ye if . . ." said Jesus. Happiness is a conditional blessing, not an accidental gift. Being an art, it requires, first of all, the mastery of certain fundamental truths. The beginner with the violin must first learn to overcome his natural tendency to stick his elbow out and scrape. The painter must learn to apply the rules of perspective and to curb his desire to put too much into his picture. The writer must learn the transcendent value of conciseness and must see for himself that style is simplicity. All these lessons have their counterparts in the art of living and it may help us if we apply a few of them to the guidance of our quest for happiness.

We may teach ourselves at the outset that no man may be happy who expects too much. Unhappy households are frequently those in which the members of the family expect each other to be something more than human. Men who are unhappy in their daily occupation are usually so because they expect more from it than a decent competence in return for long years of sacrificing labor. The demand for superfluities is the cause of much misery and moral failure. During early months of the World War, at a time when the

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Russians were expected to come forward to the aid of the Allies, military men wondered why they were so slow. The reason was that, prior to the exigencies of actual campaign, the Russian specifications required that all their projectiles should be nickel-plated. Neither the time nor the nickel was available for fulfilling these requirements for the vast number of shells that were being used on the battle front, so the Allies waited while the hosts of Germany advanced. There are too many of us who expect things in the heat and burden of life to be, so to speak, nickel-plated,—the furniture of our homes, the conduct of our husband, or wife, our children, the ingredients of our daily existence and the tools with which we work. We are not satisfied with plain and practical furnishings for the battle of life.

One suspects that the young man of great possessions who “went away sorrowful” paid for his wealth with his one chance of felicity and that Zachaeus, when he had the courage to part with a half of his possessions, began to know the joy of living. Some friends of mine had been given, on the occasion of their marriage, a large amount of expensive silver. Doubtless the donor thought that he was bestowing, upon this young couple of very modest means, something in which they would find happiness. But it was not so. It became the source of the habitual family anxiety. The burdened bridegroom carried that wretched silver up-

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stairs every night, carefully thrusting it under the bed, and downstairs every morning, for twenty years. Whenever the house was to be left for a few days "The Silver" had to be boarded out at the bank. It was as much a care as a farmer's livestock. If my friend had taken it with him on a fishing trip and gently dumped it overboard, thus ridding his life of one anxiety, he would have found his porridge just as nourishing when eaten with a plated spoon and he would have had one less cause for anxiety in his house.

"If I knew what to omit," remarked Stevenson in a discussion of English style, "I should ask no further knowledge." A perfect paragraph is one in which there are no superfluous words or phrases. A well-furnished home is one in which there is sufficient furniture for comfort and none to stumble over as you cross the room. A house filled with bric-a-brac is like a sentence cluttered with adjectives. Many a life would be happier if people had the moral courage to throw away half of the property that encumbers them and to discontinue half the activities that are supposed to contribute to their pleasure. The nerve specialist builds up his practice from people who try to put more into their days than they will hold. In the Hebrew, the word "zamar" means *to prune a vine*; in another form, "zamyр," it signifies a poem or a psalm. It is the same word in both cases and it implies the same act. The poet, from the full-

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ness and exuberance of his imagination, chooses a gem, here and there, and rejects the rest. It is his gift that he can cut down to a dozen or fourteen lines the expression of things that other men could not make clear in a volume. The painter makes his picture beautiful by the process of elimination, putting into his picture only those things which help to make his message clear and ruthlessly omitting all else. Pruning is not alone the art of the horticulturist; it is essential to the poet, the painter, most certainly to the preacher; and it is essential to the person who would make of life a thing intelligible and beautiful. The maker of a motion picture cuts down his film from two hundred thousand feet to five thousand before he shows it to the public. If only we could bring ourselves to do something like that with the superfluous parts of our lives, which only serve to confuse us and weary us, we should have a better chance of happiness. No man ever found happiness who made it his rule to get all he could and to keep all he got. Only he who loses life, said Jesus, shall have it.

There is a great difference between happiness and pleasure, though many identify the one with the other. A trip around the world may be a pleasure; but it cannot make us happy. If a woman is unhappy without a set of expensive furs, she will be unhappy with them. Things may give us pleasure, but happiness is of the inner nature.

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Yet pleasure is a good gift of God and it is well worth getting and giving. It is good to like games and to be diverted by a book or a play. He who takes pleasure in nothing is not likely to be a happy man. Life must diversify itself; even rosebushes are given to what gardeners call "sports," and, essentially, the "sport" of a rosebush and the sport of a human being spring from the same necessity for diversification. As the child is father to the man, so is play the overture, in which most of us express the themes which are, in the years of manhood and womanhood, our contribution to the symphony of life.

One can hardly commit a greater folly than the putting away of all those innocent enjoyments by which we find rest through the diversion of our thought into new and pleasurable avenues; but there is little happiness to be found among those who depend on the card-table, the theatre and the dance to make the hours away from daily duties tolerable. People who must be gadding about somewhere each night, who are ill at ease after dinner until the cards are shuffled, who think of cities only as places where there are theatres in which to be entertained and shops in which to spend money, are strangers to the deeper and more lasting joys of life. Those who like best the simpler forms of enjoyment and who pass their leisure hours in uncomplicated and restful occupations, reserving the more elaborate ways of passing time

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for those excursions of adventure which we all need occasionally, will find time for the cultivation of the powers which make for genuine happiness. Pleasure is merely a little rest by the way. It is good and we take it and are thankful; but never let us mistake it for its betters. Lives that are too constantly diverted at last become deflected. When we dart away on side-trips too often, the main road may become intolerable to us and we spend our days gathering pretty flowers when we should be getting on in our journey. In every community there is a group of people who make it their business to entertain each other. Every night in the week they come together to help each other pass the dragging hours. It is not hospitality that they practice, though of the giving of dinners there is no end; it is simply a mutual arrangement by which no man and wife of them are ever left to pass an evening together, lest they bore each other beyond bearing. There is no happiness among such people, though their lives are given to the pursuit of pleasure.

We have already referred to the folly of wanting things which are mutually exclusive of each other. A man may want to be a scholar and a race-track celebrity, a money-maker, a golf champion, a deacon in the church and a first-nighter at all the girly-girly shows; but it is not likely that any man will achieve all these things within the limits of a single life. If he did achieve them, he

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would probably discover that, as a collection, they would not make for a happy existence. Therefore he must determine which, among all his desires, are reasonably consistent with one another and with his chosen plan of life and he must cast the others aside forever.

A great deal of unhappiness is due to a habit of dreaming regretfully about the past. What marvellous opportunities we missed! Stephen Leacock, in one of his skits, tells how a real-estate man took him out to the edge of the city. "Twenty years ago," said the man, taking in a great section of improved city property with his gesture, "you could have bought all this for fifty thousand dollars." "You mean," was the answer, "that when I was a student in college, eating on four dollars a week, this opportunity was knocking at my door and I missed it?" He turned aside his head in bitter shame as he thought of his own folly. Why, in those impecunious student days, had he never happened to walk out that way with fifty thousand dollars in his pocket?

This is a burlesque of a sort of regret that often robs us of our peace. Why did we not do thus and so twenty years ago? Why did we not marry the son or the daughter of the village millionaire, who once smiled at us as we passed? Why did we not settle in Keokuk or Kalamazoo or Kokomo, instead of in this unappreciative town? Why did we not go to college and learn

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to play the saxophone? Why did we do the things we did and why did we not do the things we did not? So we fuss and fret and fume about those past days when, after all, we did the best we could with what we had. That part of life which has gone beyond our control, and which has no practical contribution to make to the shaping of tomorrow, is the part that Paul refers to when he says that he forgets what is behind and reaches out toward the mark of the future. If we can right the wrongs of yesterday or make good its losses, let us not forget them; if past blunders can guide us into ways of safety now, let us remember them; but if we cannot use the past as a tool with which to shape the present, let us put it behind us forever, for its only power is to take our happiness away.

Happiness comes when we have learned to make, of the various ingredients of our lives, a scale of living that shall be practically harmonious. There is no such thing as absolute harmony, so far as man's attainment can achieve. An orchestra is never perfectly in tune and a piano-tuner is a man who knows how to put a piano properly out of tune. There is a margin of error necessarily present in the instrument which is distributed throughout the entire scale, each note taking its share. It is just so with all the concerns of our lives. Harmony is a matter of adjusting inflexible facts to the ideal toward which we strive.

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But you will say much of this is extremely obvious. I admit that many of these sayings are trite enough. Very well, let us read the rest of our text, the words that go before and come after it. Jesus said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Whether or not he meant by "these things" the precepts we have just been laying down, the principle is unaltered. We can find happiness only when our actions are in accord with our convictions. If, today, you will live as you believe you ought to live, you will be, at least for one day, a happy man.

PEACE IN A WORLD OF TURMOIL

IF you would learn the longings of men, consider their favorite jokes. The saying, "Anything for a quiet life," is one of those jocular phrases which indicate the deepest yearning of multitudes. When Jesus invited the weary and heavy laden to come to him and find rest unto their souls, he appealed to a desire as universal as humanity. Everywhere men and women long for peace. So we are not surprised that when the Master talks to his friends on the eve of the day of his crucifixion, it is peace that he promises them. "My peace I give unto you," he says, and it is indicative of the profound tranquillity of his character that these men who knew him so well should express no astonishment that he offered them such a gift at such a time.

It is clear from his words that he thought of these men as living in two spheres. Two opposing regimens claimed them and they must pay the claims of both. They were to labor in the practical world and of that world they must be a part. They must travel its dusty roads, making their way among its jostling crowds, doing the work of men whose appointed habitation is a scene of strife and tribulation, yet they must keep themselves

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unspotted and must dwell within the sphere of peace. It was for them to touch pitch and not be defiled, to "live amidst the tempest and not be tempest-tossed."

"In the world," he said, "ye shall have tribulation." As he looked into the future, he saw how terribly the world would use them. Before them lay the path of apostolic duty, beset with all the hate and prejudice of a decadent pagan civilization. They were to preach the word of reconciliation to no world of amiable toleration; but to one that would reply with jeers and stones, with stripes and prison cells, with cold, hunger, hatred and cruel death. At least three of these eleven men, to whom he leaves the gift of peace, shall die as martyrs, by stoning, by beheading and by the cross. It was no easy prospect, yet he offered them peace and his promise was fulfilled. It has been the task of those who have followed them to persuade world-weary men and women that this realm of peace is no inaccessible mountain peak, but that it is to be gained by any traveler who wants to find it and who will honestly try.

It was Ruskin who wondered, not at what men suffered, but at what they missed. That so many lives should fail to find rest and tranquillity until they enter into the mysterious silence of the grave is a strange commentary on man's blindness to the gifts of God. There are multitudes of useful, good, kindly people who never know an hour of

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restful quiet. There are multitudes of men who, in going from business place to home, go simply from one scene of exhausting anxiety to another. There are households in which are to be found all the physical comforts that money can buy or skill provide, but in which no one is ever known to be at rest, save in such hours as are grudgingly given to sleep. Their inmates are slaves to the spirit of restless pleasure, of nervous tension and social extravagance. Of every molehill these people make a mountain and of every teapot a tempest. To be a guest in such a home, with its confused round of rackety pleasures, its jangling telephone bells, its incessant going and coming and its utter neglect of the cultivation of the higher values of family life, is to be made to understand why the young women of our prosperous classes are so often quite without that repose in which alone charm can be made manifest and why young men of presumably good rearing are utterly without manners.

The things which destroy our peace are often necessary and good in themselves. Our tendency to wrangle with life grows out of anxiety to do our duty. If people had no care for one another, there would be little quarreling. If parents did not love their children there would be little extravagance. A thoroughly selfish person would find it easy enough to live a comfortable, tranquil life. It is a pity that our solicitude for our duty

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and for each other should be perverted until life becomes embittered by the very things that should make it sweet.

To know the peace of Christ it is not necessary to avoid the common human conflict. If we are to do more than while away an indolent existence, life cannot be soft and easy, even in the best of circumstances. No philosophy of mere amiability will suffice. That proverbial phrase, "anything for a quiet life" is usually quoted in justification of compromise or surrender. We must not gain peace at the expense of principle or the violation of conviction. This world is full of real trouble and, unless we selfishly elect to live only in the sunshine, there must be many days when the valley of the shadows shall close in on us before, at last, we find our way to the green fields and still waters beyond. It is not the plan of God that human life should be a soft and easy thing. In the most divine of all utterances there is much talk of trials and crosses and much urging to bear burdens with consecrated courage.

Yet, in the midst of this troublous world there is peace to be had. It is not found in the distractions of pleasure-seeking, it does not come to us while we shuffle to the frenzied droning of the saxophone, nor is it the thing that accrues to us when we have made a profitable business deal. It is discovered only in the realm of the spirit; it is the gift of God; it is found in that "other" world

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in which the Christian, while he fights life's battles and does life's work, yet finds rest unto his soul.

Our commonest failure is in our foolish blindness to the practical availability of our own spiritual powers. Religion is regarded either as a pleasant diversion or as a fanatical fad by a host of good people who only need religion to become efficient and happy. Their lives are spent in jangling discord because they refuse to cultivate the only faculty of their natures which can help them to peace. The old-fashioned evangelists exhort their hearers to "get right with God." There is sound human experience behind that exhortation; nor can the treatment of the most progressive psychologist improve on it. If the life is not right with God it cannot be right with anything, for man is, fundamentally, a spiritual being. It is vain to suppose that we can secure peace by the adjustment of some top-story piece of furniture, such as our economic status, when the foundation of life is askew. Multitudes of unhappy people would find peace if only they could summon enough common sense to avail them in adjusting their spiritual powers to the business of successful living.

One reason why contemplation of the spiritual verities brings peace is that such contemplation helps us to a correct perspective. "The lesson of life," says Emerson, "is to believe what the years and the centuries say against the hours." If you

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would appreciate the music of an orchestra, you must not sit too close to the kettle-drums. If you would know the harmonies of life, you must learn how to withdraw from the clamor of life's cacophonous busyness. You must know what man to follow in order that you may come to that quiet upper room where the divine voice can be heard. Religious faith alone is not enough to accomplish this for most people. They need the help that comes through "the practice of the presence of God." Worship, prayer, the reading of scripture and habitual withdrawal to the quiet interior of a church all aid us in finding this peace. For this reason all churches should be beautiful, quiet and harmonious, even though they be not elaborate. The architectural horrors one sees, built by men whose idol is efficiency, have done inestimable harm to the religion of America, having done a part in turning the minister into a showman and the congregation into a gaping crowd of thrill-seekers. If you would be helped in the spiritual life, find a church somewhere in which you are made conscious of withdrawal from the glare and noise of the world. In such a place the voices of eternity will seem to speak and the serene assurances of faith will find you in a mood of reverent acceptance.

This age is not a peaceful age. Each day brings its new alarms and each day we are exhorted to be up and doing in some new enterprise, to be tearing down and rebuilding, to reform all things

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that are and to bring to pass all things that are not. We hold in vigorous idolatry such words as punch and pep and ginger and all those other condimental qualities which are supposed just now to season the lives of all the strenuous, red-blooded and efficient. It is a blessing that we can find, somewhere, a deep, still pool, away from the turbulent stream and untroubled by the furious paddlings of those who know no kind of progress save rushing round and round in a whirlpool.

This peace of Christ is not stagnation. There is nothing more positive, nothing with more of the quality of the flame about it than the life of the person who has entered into abiding relations with the Divine. If you would understand this, learn to think of Him, a solitary figure in a world of hostile hate, making His way through the clamoring crowd with a strength unparalleled yet with a tranquillity never disturbed, turning the world aside from its course, yet never himself turned aside by it.

It is the quiet of perfected power. Sometimes in these days of automobiles we are terrified by the snorting of an ongoing chariot which belches smoke and stench as it goes, rattling, skidding and exploding on its way, an object both of terror and contempt. Then slips by, at half again its careening speed, some great machine, gliding silently, tranquilly, without fume or fuss. It is the silence of complete adjustment.

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We remember how Jesus slept in the ship while the tempest roared and all the others were terrified. The only person in that boat who could quiet the storm was the only one who was not disquieted by it. So we turn to him and in the midst of our turbulent world he reveals to us a sphere of peace. And may it be that when you are sore beset, when the winds are high and the waves threaten, you may look across the broken waters and see him coming to you. May it be that all the futile tossings of your little ship shall cease as you hear his words, "Peace, be still."



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